ENGLISH CONTEXT SUMMARY NOTES

“Encountering conflict”

Includes:

- Life of Galileo,
- The Quiet American,
- Every Man in this Village is a Liar,
- Paradise Road

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Understanding the context

Conflict is inevitably encountered by all humans in different ways. Consider the types of conflicts faced by individuals: personal conflict, interpersonal conflict and extra-personal conflict. The study of this Context requires an understanding of a range of conflicts including moral dilemmas, differences with immediate others and social unrest, such as war. However, it is imperative to also consider the various ways in which people ‘encounter’ conflict in their lives and how they deal with and resolve the battles and challenges they face as a result of particular conflicts.

It is necessary to define the phrase ‘encountering conflict’. ‘Conflict’ may be defined as a clash, disagreement or battle between two or more parties. It may be driven by the need to survive or by contrasting opinions, principles, ideologies or modes of survival. It may be constituted by psychological distress, contradictory political views or armed warfare. Also, it is valuable to consider the antonyms of ‘conflict’, such as peace, harmony, agreement and reconciliation.

To ‘encounter’ conflict may be an unexpected or chance meeting with an adversary in confrontation or combat. The people involved in conflict may be perpetrators or victims. Whether they cause or are consequently affected by conflict, individuals are largely influenced by their values and beliefs. Culture, religion, history and family actively manipulate the behaviour of individuals in both their contributions to conflict and their reactions to conflict.

Conflicts occur on many levels. In film and literature they are often characterised by a clash between good and evil. However, in real life the distinction between good and evil is not always clearly defined and a conflict may arise from a difference of opinion or a varied angle of perception. Individuals must understand and make choices between hate, arrogance, intolerance, superiority, greed and anger or compassion, tolerance, empathy, kindness, love, kindness, generosity and peace.
Personal Conflict

The inner conflicts of an individual may embody a personal dilemma of a moral nature. Inevitably the individual will have to make a choice in order to resolve and shed the emotional residue of the personal conflict or pursue an emotional battle. The decisions made by individuals may not only create a personal struggle but may change the direction of their own lives and the lives of their loved ones. Internal conflict arises from making personal choices and can lead to feelings of indecisiveness, confusion or anxiety. An individual may find themselves in an arena of inner conflict when they feel a need for others to recognise that something is important to them.

Personal beliefs and values contribute to shaping the identity of an individual, which influences personality, cognitive and physical behaviour. There is less potential for conflict when people share complementary value systems. In contrast, people who believe strongly in a value may welcome confrontation. Individual priorities and preferences may also lead people into conflict of a personal nature, such as a battle of conscience or a concern for displeasing others. At the ethical core of personal conflict is trust.

The dispositions and temperaments of individuals may influence their decisions and behaviour which will inevitably impact on those around them. Dispositional tendencies and established personality traits, such as being agreeable or harbouring high levels of personal negativity, will impact on the conflict management styles preferred by an individual. Those who have a personal negative view may easily become dominated in interactions or appear detached from dispute resolutions. Some may acquire greater confidence and a clearer sense of identity. Through personal conflicts, people learn more about themselves and others, thus they grow. Furthermore, personal reactions to trauma and change as a result of conflict may lead to greater personal strength and may alter the values that have been guiding factors.

When people pursue private and personal interests, the consequences may benefit the individual and their family. Conversely, the personal objectives of individuals may clash or one’s personal goals and desires may affect the extent to which they accept or neglect their responsibilities. Personal interests may influence and interfere with judgements with beneficial or detrimental effects on the lives of individuals and their loved ones. An individual’s capacity to make objective judgments may be reduced when personal interests cloud obligations, reason and objectivity. People may act on their personal interests when changing their job or career for more income or for greater satisfaction and the consequences may provide some improvement to their lives. However, when people neglect or disregard their responsibilities and ethical duties in their pursuit of personal interests, a situation of conflict may arise.

The desire for power is an aspect of our inherent competitive human nature. Individuals may strive for power in any setting in which there are competing interests. Conflict may arise as individuals or groups try to gain advantage over one another. In order to survive, humans will make sacrifices and act in their own best interests. Human instinct dictates that one acts to preserve one’s own human life.
One’s conflict management style is deemed to have a proportional impact on the extent to which they experience conflict in their personal environment. The strategies an individual utilises in managing conflict largely depend on emotional intelligence, stress management and capacity to accommodate compromise and stand firm. Individuals may encounter inner conflict in their relationships with family and friends, in their professional life or in their civic life. On a personal level, if an individual is open to additional possibilities, factors such as miscommunication, fear and assumption may be less pervasive and damaging. The resolutions of ongoing tensions may stimulate either cooperative or antagonistic behaviour.

**Interpersonal Conflict**

Interpersonal conflicts may occur between family members, between neighbours or within groups in the community. Relationships may be weakened or strengthened by conflict. In resolving interpersonal conflict, both parties must collaborate to find an acceptable solution that is mutually satisfactory. Approaches that embody fairness and equal participation are most likely to last. Effective communication and empathy are essential.

Conflicts between loved ones, such as family and friends, parents and children and between marital spouses, may stem from an inner conflict. Personal issues may be projected into the relationship and exacerbate interpersonal relationships. One’s behaviour can contribute to interpersonal problems when an individual’s focus on their personal interests damages a personal or professional relationship. Opposing beliefs, opinions and values may also be sources of conflict within relationships.

Conflict occurs in healthy relationships, but can force a relationship to come to a painful end. External conflict can lead to feelings of anger, hurt, fear, jealousy, resentment and hostility. Honesty, respect and trust are core factors that contribute to the resolution of interpersonal conflicts. The end of relationships may cause further conflict, particularly if there has been a betrayal, a battle for pride or disappointed expectations.

Methods of resolving interpersonal conflicts will impact significantly on relationships. Individuals may chose to avoid a conflict if they perceive confrontation will cause them significant loss or change. People who find it difficult to assert themselves or control their emotions may be reluctant to acknowledge that a conflict exists. Individual differences and opposite character traits may also hinder the resolution of conflict within relationships. However, avoidance strategies will eventually cause further tension in interactions and denial can lead to even greater conflict in the future.

More competitive approaches involve the use or abuse of power to manipulate the conflict in their favour. This can exacerbate distrust between parties and hinder long-term conflict resolution. In a school or work setting, conflict in the form of bullying may arise as a result of a struggle for attention from peers, family members or colleagues. Alternatively, bullying may be the manifestation of a power struggle. The duration of the victimisation of an individual by a bully depends on the way in which the conflict is managed and resolved. Often, a third party can help to assuage the personal issues impacting on the negative relationship.
**Extra-personal Conflict**

Conflicts which have an impact on society may stem from the political, religious, cultural and social beliefs of the people. Political conflicts in which national sovereignty and interests are defended at the expense of other nations may have international, national and local impacts.

Competing national interests may culminate in battles of war to attain resources, particularly oil. This was demonstrated during the Gulf War of the early 1990s when Iraq invaded Kuwait. This led to a multinational response led by the United States of America, who also had a vested interest in the outcome given their reliance on oil for their industrial needs. Economic and trade factors can have a significant impact on both triggering and resolving wars between nations.

Citizenship entails both social rights and responsibilities, generally instituted by political and security forces which are expected to bring perpetrators of the law to justice. Authoritative institutions such as governments and police bodies carry a social responsibility to defend the human rights of citizens. Denial of essential human freedoms, including constitutional rights to freedom of expression, privacy and ‘a fair trial’ may be adversely or advantageously affected by one’s social class. Denial of opportunity may be afforded to those of lower social status. Nonetheless, conflict that may ensue from refusal of justice may bring individuals within a community together in a common cause, but cause further dissention against the governing body.

Historically, religious faith has inspired much persecution of those who share a certain faith. The Protestants were perceived as a threat to the Catholics in the seventeenth century and Jews and Palestinians continue fighting in the twenty-first century. The cultural customs and values of a people may clash with those of different nations, hence a possible clash between new settlers in a foreign land and the natives. This conflict is evident in *The Secret River* between British convicts and Aborigines during the colonisation of Australia in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Millions of civilians, especially women and children, were killed as a result of use of sophisticated weaponry in bloody conflicts, both between and within countries, in the twentieth century. The tragic impact of such conflict on children is evident in statistical evidence of children making up half the number of refugees in the last two decades.

In global conflicts, a mediating party can be necessary in reaching agreement and resolution. Different cultures and societies hold diverse interests and values. When these are challenged and defended, compromise and negotiation can be difficult. The United Nations is the result of international commitment to peace-keeping, justice and equal rights. The United Nations provides a forum for political debate and assists in negotiating disputes and ceasefires between nations.

The role of diplomacy is paramount in negotiations and communication between different nations and groups. Miscommunication, misinterpretation and misunderstanding can cause cultural and social conflicts to escalate. Acceptance, rather than assumption, is required to facilitate positive communications that may lead to the resolution of an extra-personal conflict.
Background

Religious Conflict

Since the beginning of civilisation, religion has been an instrument used by humans to make sense of their existence. Early Egyptians, Greeks and Romans worshipped many gods though did not share the same gods. Such beliefs in different gods continue to be the source of much global division in our current world. Conflicts stemming from opposing religious beliefs have marred human history through the ages. Major international religions are Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. All have been involved in battles for superiority at some point in history.

Religiously-motivated conflict has brought oppression, intolerance and unjustified discrimination for many innocent civilians, who have been victims of violence, discrimination, violation and forced exodus from their homelands. However, the peace-building and humanitarian efforts of religious groups have also impacted on our world significantly. World Vision is a Christian organisation that provides relief services and increasingly, development strategies and assistance for third world countries. The Quakers are a religious society recognised largely for their commitment to non-violent conflict resolution strategies.

Commitment to religious faith is inextricably intertwined with personal identity. Thus, a perceived attack or threat to one’s beliefs is equally a threat to their central being. In religious conflicts, compromise can be very difficult or near impossible when the parties involved seek to protect their right to ‘eternal salvation’. Furthermore, the insular expectation that followers will accept the dogmas of their religion without question leaves little room for negotiation and compromise.

Religions are based on interpretations of scriptures, thus conflict and debate can arise as a result of different interpretations. The interpretation that attracts the majority of followers is usually victorious in such conflicts. The moderate views of most religious followers contrast with the views of extremists whose literal interpretations and radical measures can cause conflict to escalate.

Fundamentalist religious groups uphold the most conservative aspects of their respective religions with little tolerance and are dedicated to the preservation of their religious traditions. Evangelical Christianity is often deemed fundamentalist. The Taliban are fundamental Muslims who enforce highly conservative rules which particularly oppress Afghani women and individual freedom. It is often the case that such fundamentalist groups are largely dissatisfied with modernity and seek some form of purification.
Some religious wars are listed below:

- The Israeli and Palestinian conflict is a battle between Jews, Muslims and Christians for ‘Holy Land’.
- ‘The troubles’ in Northern Ireland stemmed partly from the clash between Catholics and Protestants.
- The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a clash between Muslims, Roman Catholics and Serbian Orthodox.
- Cyprus has been divided between Christians and Muslims.
- ‘Religious cleansing’ in East Timor killed many Christians as Muslim Indonesia sought power.
- Various conflicts in Indonesia have been battles between Christians and Muslims.
- Conflict in India is rife among Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and Animists.
- In Sri Lanka, Buddhists and Hindus fight each other for independence.

**Political Conflict**

The role of the government is to create policies that will benefit and protect the people that it represents. Governments have a great responsibility to enforce the rules that ensure justice and security for all citizens. Types of government include republican, democratic, communist, monarchy and dictatorship. All Governments are entrusted with the task of acting in the best interests of the nation and the individuals within it, although some do not. Within nations, political parties and organisations debate opposing views and voices. Coalitions are often created in response to a conflict of interests in the direction of governmental policy.

Governments largely seek sustainable approaches to human security. Some invest heavily in military and weaponry defence systems, both as a warning to other nations and civil groups within the nation itself. However, use of police or military force may motivate resentment and civil unrest in the form of protests and civil wars. Threats posed by terrorists trying to achieve their political goals have exposed political judgements and government responses that have led to both greater conflict and peace agreements.

Greed, power and grievances have often marred the actions of governments, which subsequently have been a source of suffering for individuals and social groups. Historically, in periods of political instability, governments have been guilty of discrimination against minorities within their powers. Oppression and persecution that has ensued has caused denial of basic human rights to those most vulnerable.

Economic factors have been both causes of conflict and sources for negotiations of peace. World trade changed and expanded substantially after World War II. Though treaties and legal arrangements were made at this time to reduce trade barriers, the trade of goods and services has increased the divisions between wealthy, industrialised countries and developing nations. Though trade is an important means of raising the living standards within a nation, such benefits have not always spread through the populations of poorer, commodity-trading nations where there has been
little industrial development. In developing countries, conflict has stemmed from the inequitable transfer of resources to rural and urban populations.

Peace and cooperation between countries can be enhanced by trade agreements, particularly when mutual dependence exists. Trade can act as a deterrent to conflict between nations as conflict can make trade difficult. International trade policies are inextricably connected to national welfare, thus loss of positive international economic relations would pose a threat to the welfare of a population and contradict standard economic theory, which dictates that nations maximise their social welfare.

The position of individuals within their society will inevitably impact on the positions Governments take in relation to the evolution of trade and economic policies. Factors such as economic class and the industry in which they are employed will play a major role in how individuals and groups experience and contribute to relevant conflicts. The opposing interests of parties involved in conflicts such as industrial disputes are largely founded in the wealth and class of individuals affected. This has been evident in periods of intense industrialisation. Hence, the unequal distribution of wealth within a national population can exacerbate conflict and hinder negotiations and compromise.

Political battles have created victims in the following countries:

- Britain and Northern Ireland
- The Soviet Union and the United States of America (the ‘Cold War’)
- North Korea and South Korea
- Iraq and the United States of America and their allies

Satellite channels broadcasting the besieged Iraqi leader among cheering crowds as US-led troops push toward the capital city.
April 4, 2003

Saddam Hussein
5th President of the Republic of Iraq
2003 Invasion of Iraq

Source: Iraqi News Agency, an organ of the defunct old regime (Wikipedia)
Robert Mugabe in 1991
President of Zimbabwe

Author: Mangwanani

A rare studio photograph of India’s "Father of the Nation" Mahatma Gandhi taken in London at the request of Lord Irwin, 1931.

Cultural Conflict

Culture underscores the lives and relationships of individuals, thus it influences both conflict and conflict resolutions. Culture may be defined broadly as a particular race, ethnicity or nationality that shares a set of values, which shape the attitude, perceptions and behaviour of people. Culture contributes to one’s identity and provides a sense of belonging. Conflicts may arise when cultural identity and belonging is seen to be threatened or misunderstood. Generalisations and stereotypes regarding particular cultures may form the basis of intractable conflicts. Cultural conflict is inseparable from political and religious conflict because the ways individuals perceive their circumstances is grounded in their own cultural beliefs. Generational conflicts such as those between adults and children are influenced by temporal cultural values. Conflicts in the workplace may stem from differing disciplinary cultures. Cultural values influence views on gender roles and define acceptable methods of communication between individuals.

In resolving cultural conflicts, it is necessary to recognise and accept shared and different identities. Immersion experiences within other cultures may alleviate intolerance and ignorance that cause cultural conflicts if those involved are able to accept cultural differences, rather than make judgements of superiority. Familiarity with other cultures may be a means of taming some conflicts that arise within homes, organisations, communities and nations. Such cultural fluency may reduce suffering as a result of cultural clashes.

The struggle for harmonious relations between the vastly different Aboriginal and British/European cultures within Australia continues today. The differences in concepts of land ownership meant that
the British failed to acknowledge that Aborigines see the land as owning them as it is their library, that is, the source of all their customs, ceremonies, laws, food and medicine. Grenville’s novel describes the beginning of the destruction of the indigenous civilisation’s library, hence their culture.

In Australia each wave of immigrants has been challenged and persecuted to some extent. The post World War II European migrants were put down with derogatory names such as ‘wogs’ and ‘spicks’. In the 1970’s and 1980’s Asian migrants encountered similar insults with terms such as ‘gooks’ and ‘chinks’. While some of this cultural tension still exists, the use of such racial slurs is thankfully far less tolerated by the majority of society today. This may be partly explained by a greater exposure to the ‘new’ culture and a recognition and greater acceptance of difference between the ethnic groups.

Such cultural conflicts occur all over the world. An example of a recent cultural conflict that has created victims is in Zimbabwe where the government led by Robert Mugabe has uprooted many white farmers and their families from their land. The history of the United States of America is littered with examples of cultural confrontations: from the North versus South battles of the American Revolution through to segregation issues between ‘whites’ and negro/African-Americans and in some cities problems between Hispanic groups and other ethnic groups.

Consider similar conflicts which have occurred or are still occurring in the following countries:

- Germany
- Afghanistan
- South Africa
- Ireland
- Rwanda
- Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Cambodia
Social Conflict

Within social relationships, conflict may involve a clash between opposing powers operating in a particular society. Social conflicts stem from the values upheld by individuals and social groups and the interests they support and defend against a social authority. The basis for individual judgement of situations is largely dependent on social class and status, through which social power is also attributed. Needs and instincts may fuel social conflict and dissention when the needs of members of minority groups are perceived as insufficiently met. Social conflict yields psychological distress and possibly physical ramifications.

Social structures, such as hierarchies and class systems, have often given way to rebellion with tragic outcomes. Traditional patriarchal and theocratic social systems no longer dominate the social arena evidencing positive changes and growth can occur in the long-term aftermath of social conflicts. The freedoms we enjoy in society today have been the result of conflicts between minority and majority groups. Changing attitudes have liberated future generations from oppression. The experiences of social conflict have strengthened communities and families that have found themselves at odds with social authorities.

The resolution of social conflict is largely dependent on compromise, but threats may be used as a method by which to gain speedier resolution. However, physical violence can be manifested in social conflict when threats are used to create a sense of fear as a tactic of intimidation to gain agreement. Violence may lead to further violence in acts of retaliation and revenge.

Riots are outbreaks of lawlessness where a crowd may erupt in violent public protest, anger or disgust in response to the actions and decisions of authorities or individuals. Racial tensions erupted during the Los Angeles riots in the 1990s, and the Cronulla riots. Grief and fear were motivating factors in the riots in response to the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Resolutions reached in circumstances of bargaining, particularly with terrorist organisations, may not last or prevent the conflict from resurfacing in the future. The volatile nature of social conflict means that it is difficult to permanently and peacefully resolve.

The power of collaboration in confronting adversity may be used or abused by those who yield power. Leaders may take advantage of their power in society to manipulate others to serve their own personal agendas. This is exemplified by Abigail Williams in The Crucible. In direct contrast, leaders may use their power to improve attitudes and address public issues with reason and honour as evidenced in Omagh by Michael Gallagher. Communities and groups may gain strength and hope through collaborative campaigns, such as the Omagh Self Help and Support Group.
One of the positive outcomes of social conflict may be the union and solidarity that creates new bonds between individuals and victimised or marginalised social groups and provides some hope of moving forward. Also, interpersonal relationships may be strengthened through experiences of social conflict. Issues in the marital relationship between John and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* are resolved as their ordeal climaxes. Furthermore, resolution to social conflict is largely dependent on individuals finding peace within themselves and pride in their personal sense of honour and integrity. Social conflicts pose particular challenges for individuals who are forced to choose between conformity and silence, and resistance to oppressive and corrupt authorities.
Themes and issues related to the context

Causes of Conflict

Conflicts commonly stem from a clash of beliefs, ideas, ideologies, principles, expectations or interests.

The different views and values that pertain to certain social groups and individuals fabricate the inevitability of social conflicts. When views and values are repressed, defence mechanisms are manifested in the form of conflict as strategies to uphold personal or collective ideals are implemented. Cultural fluency is an increasing phenomenon in our modern world in which globalisation has brought greater familiarity among nations through the acceptance of multicultural societies. Historically, the limited opportunities and strategies to learn about other cultures caused many conflicts. Difficulties in communication meant that much was unknown, thus a fear of the unknown was the cause of much hostility particularly for settlers to new countries, such as America and Australia. When cultural difference is the subject of attack, there is need for acceptance and compromise in order for the needs of opposing parties to be met satisfactorily.

History has demonstrated an inherent need in humans to strive for power. Due to competing interests individuals or groups will try to gain advantage over others for their own benefit. In power struggles, the strong are able to survive whereas the weak are exploited and defeated. Majority groups may initiate conflict to defeat minority groups, who are often victims of religious and political persecution. Power can be asserted in different ways. Physical power and strength is used in battles of war and violent confrontations or for the purposes of intimidation. Intellectual power can be a method of manipulation and assertiveness to exercise influence over others and gain social power. Both threats and force may be used in attempts to coerce individuals and groups to relinquish their efforts to obtain superiority. Minority groups often lack the physical and intellectual resources and power needed to protect themselves, thus the more powerful may control the conflict. Power can also be used to enact change, thus the powerful have a capacity to have significant impact on a state of affairs. Battles for power can result in a cycle of conflict in which parties clash at numerous stages in the process of resolving conflict between them.

Conflict may escalate for individuals in the aftermath of major social conflict. Individuals may be thrust into moral dilemmas and be motivated to pursue a conflict as a symptom of their suffering and pain. Vengeance and the pursuit of justice may fuel conflicts further. Resentment and hostility may linger as an individual tries to comprehend the reasons a conflict escalates into violence.
Responses to Conflict

Individuals and groups respond to conflict in different ways depending on their religious beliefs, cultural and social backgrounds and personal experiences. Appropriate behaviour is after all determined by one’s customs and their personal understanding of social norms. State laws and social rules also have some influence on the ways in which people respond to conflict when they encounter it.

In large-scale conflicts, **violence** and aggressive behaviour, such as fighting, beating or killing an opposing party, creates tragic and devastating consequences for nations, communities, families and individuals. Violence may be used against a perceived enemy with the intention of defeat and victory. However, history has shown that the use of violence in attempts to resolve conflict may lead to more violence, thus such reactions to conflict are problematic. The aftermath of bloody battles in war and terrorist attacks can lead to renewed conflict or facilitate peace processes and changes in social attitudes.

In small-scale conflicts between individuals, such as parents and children or marital spouses, responses may vary depending on the nature of the individuals involved who may either fuel or pacify the argument. When couples seek only to please their partner and concede their own personal interests, they may relinquish opportunities for relationship and individual growth.

Conflict management involves the capacity to solve problems and accept differences. Collaborating involves sharing one’s own views and listening to the views of others. Collaborative responses to conflicts can allow individuals to recognise contrasts and tensions in relationships and viewpoints. In a process of collaboration to resolve a conflict, the primary aim is to reach a mutual agreement. Though constructive discussions take time, effort and commitment, conflict may be prevented in the future if all parties are satisfied. Through compromise and cooperation, parties in conflict may be able to meet in the middle. Compromise reached during negotiations may be facilitated by a mediating party.

Accommodating or obliging by yielding to the opposing view may serve to keep peace, but the potential for a lasting resolution is unlikely through such responses. The option to avoid, delay or withdraw from conflict leaves at least one party with largely unmet needs that originally caused the conflict to arise. In contrast, responses to conflict that attempt to solely control the outcome through manipulation, force or influence may result in victory, but may fuel further conflict in the future by creating latent resentment and hostility.
**Consequences of Conflict**

The suffering and tragedy that ensues from violent conflict causes lasting traumatic effects on those involved. In violations of the basic human right to life, the families and communities of deceased victims are left to try to make sense of their loss and seek justice and retribution. The plight of such people may incur further conflict as they encounter obstacles to resolving the inner and interpersonal conflict they subsequently face.

Nonetheless, conflict can serve as a catalyst to improving relations between nations and cultural, political or religious groups. Conflict can have positive impacts on societies and can bring about social change that enriches the lives of individuals. Much of the freedom we enjoy today has been borne of past conflicts. Thus, it is worth considering whether conflict has been a necessity at times. Growth and development of humanity and civilisation is instigated by challenges to social norms, especially those standards which oppress minority groups. Shelter from different ideologies and views may have more detrimental consequences than overt confrontation. The outcomes of challenges and conflicts can often be increased strength and renewed peace within personal relationships, communities and nations.

![Image](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fd/National_Park_Service_9-11_Statue_of_Liberty_and_WTC_fire.jpg)

The towers of the World Trade Centre burn shortly after United Airlines Flight 175 crashed into the South Tower on the right. To its left is the still smoking North Tower, struck earlier by American Airlines Flight 11.
**Resolutions of Conflict**

In order to resolve conflict, agreement must be reached between opposing parties. In each of the set texts for this Context, the authors present conflicts on different levels and offer messages about resolution of conflict.

Solutions are dependent on accommodation or compromise as the nature of conflict is often that vastly different views are defended. Methods of persuasion to gain agreement from opposition in conflict vary from violent battles to the pacifist protest, such as that of The Quakers. Such groups prefer to avoid conflict on the basis of religious beliefs that uphold the value of pacifism. Individuals may prefer to avoid confrontation because of their own personal nature.

A third party may be required when conflict has reached a stalemate. The United Nations has played a fundamental role in the capacity of providing peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to achieve some resolution of global and national conflicts. Resolution and peace can only be achieved when there is alleviation of perceived threats. Truces and treaties, such as the International Declaration of Human Rights, are instruments designed to achieve resolution of conflict.

Conflict resolution requires communication. Family and friends have a greater chance of resolving interpersonal conflict if grievances and concerns are aired. On an extra-personal level, nations may cease conflict through negotiations and the signing of peace agreements. Through debate and reconciliation, conflict can be a catalyst for change rather than a source of death and destruction.

The durability of the resolution is largely dependent on whether core differences between conflicting parties have been resolved sufficiently. If both parties are satisfied with the outcome of negotiations, the resolution is more likely to last into the future and prevent the conflict from resurfacing in the future.
TEXT 1: PARADISE ROAD

Themes

Conflict in war

Before looking at how WWII influenced the women held captive in Sumatra, it is important firstly to look at the broader spectrum of this war and its effect on the entire world.

Many WWII films focus on Hitler’s attempted genocide of the Jewish race, *Paradise Road* is based on female Prisoners held captive by the Japanese in Sumatra. This film demonstrates, through war, human’s desire for power and control. Conflict can also arise in war based on either different political beliefs, religious beliefs, or disparate ideologies. When two countries or groups both desire this power for their own benefit, it is always so that one will achieve while the weaker falls.

Between the 14th of February to the 28th of March, Sumatra was invaded by the Imperial Japanese forces. The Pacific War (a part of WWII) was occurring in South-East Asia at this time and the invasion of Sumatra was part of this.

*Paradise Road*, though focusing on WWII, looks primarily at Australian, British and New Zealand women and their conflict with Japanese Prisoner of War Camps. The conflict of war in this film is primarily set in a female Prisoner of War camp, and therefore displays these women as victims of inhumane and sadistic treatment by the Japanese. Here we see these women stripped of their social rights and freedom.

In 1942, after dining and dancing at a gala ball in Singapore, these women were crammed aboard a boat headed to Australia as the Japanese were about to take control of the city. After the Japanese attacked and sank the boat in which the women were travelling on, some of the women who survived made it to the shore of Sumatra (a Japanese-occupied island). It was here that they were rounded up and were held captive for three and a half years.
Personal conflict

Not only does *Paradise Road* examine conflict in war, but it observes how individuals face conflict within themselves. Often this conflict is based on a dilemma of moral or ethical consciousness. In *Paradise Road* many women are forced to make a decision of whether or not to go with the Japanese men. Here they face the personal conflict of having to decide what takes precedence; whether to choose survival, sanitary living conditions, nutritious and plentiful food and safety with the Japanese; or staying in the terrible conditions of the camp but keeping their dignity. This personal dilemma of a moral nature, presents a struggle where the women’s beliefs and values effect their decision. Through this conflict these women learn more about themselves and others; discovering either their strength or frailty, hope or submission. The conflict and trauma faced, and the decisions made in these circumstances; greatly effects and changes the person- altering their values or attaining strength and self-assurance.

They also face personal conflict when trying to decide whether or not to take part in the choir. Many women fear their lives will be endangered if they partake, however others believe they need that sense of freedom and hope in order to survive. The character of Topsy also faces the personal conflict as to whether or not she should try to escape the camp. Another woman faces a personal dilemma in risking her own life in order to save another. She decides to crawl under the fence to trade goods with the men, in order to get medicine to help a fellow prisoner. Many of the other women become furious stating she is risking all of their rations being taken away if she is caught, while others commend her on such a brave and selfless act. This noble act leads to her death, having petrol poured all over her and being set alight. Although her decisions lead to her demise; it brought some women closer, making them realise the importance of helping one another, however it made others believe they should only fend for themselves.

One woman states “You know we’ve got buckleys chance of getting through the war in that camp. You think I want to end up in some shallow grave in Sumatra?” Another woman named Topsy Merritt asks if there is hot water and soap and goes to join the Japanese men. When questioned by the other women she states "Are you asking me to give up food and soap and god knows what else, to starve and sing?” Despite this the other women had great influence on her, insisting she remain dignified, and she decided to remain in the camp. After Susan speaks out of turn, she is consequently punished by having to kneel in front of wooden stakes. Therefore she faces a personal struggle of survival, having the strength and will power to stay kneeling, and as a result alive.
Extra-personal conflict

Extra-personal conflict is that which impacts on society as a whole. This is often attributed to the political, cultural, religious, political or social beliefs of the people (especially those with power). When national interests differ, holding opposing views, battles of war often result. Society and community members have social responsibilities which are often enforced by political (government leaders) and security forces. Offering authority and power to these institutions, it can be said that the public’s freedom and safety is taken from them, yet it can also be said that they are protected. Depending on one’s social class and the country in which they live, their freedom; of expression, privacy, constitutional rights and fair trial will be different.

The women in Paradise Road face extra-personal conflict as they are not only exposed to war but bound and confined by it. Being trapped in a Prisoner of War Camp, these women have little to no freedom. They have been stripped of their human rights and therefore face great extra-personal conflict. It is not only these women in the camp who face this form of conflict, but people all over the world are affected by WWII.

For most of the female protagonists in this film, survival was the outcome. The allied soldiers did not arrive in Sumatra for over two weeks after the war was over. This shows how the prisoner of war camp was one of the most remote. Women and children were taken to Jakarta for medical treatment and then returned to their homelands. In the face of war, these women formed lifelong friendships.

Consequences of conflict

The consequence of war on individuals, families, cities and whole nations can be immense and vary in many ways. Paradise Road observes how people of a Prisoner of war camp ultimately try to survive through World War II.

This film does more than look at the global effect of the war, but rather the struggles individuals’ face and the strain it has on their relationships. The women in this film lose a lot (as have those in real life), however it is important to note that the effect of the war on others results in the gaining of some positive aspects.

Many of the women in Paradise Road lose their innocence; especially those that are either young or have led an aristocratic life. Other women lose their loved ones, while others lose the hope of ever escaping and leading a normal life. However in Paradise Road we see others grow stronger, become more assertive and believe they can accomplish their dreams. We see many female characters transform from being naïve and innocent to hardened and resilient due to the tough circumstances they have endured.

Susan for example learns, not only from the war but other women, to follow her dreams. Adrienne learns she is a leader and has a maternal side to her. Dr Verstak also discovers her maternal side, greatly influencing Susan. Daisy realises she can’t offer herself to the Japanese men yet she can
raise the spirits of many through her strength and positivity. Rosemary learns how much she loves her partner, so much so that she dies from a broken heart and loss of hope. In this film, these character changes are not necessarily a willing choice on their part, rather they have been forced into physical and psychological change brought on by the conflict of war.

**Structure**

**Chronology**

Chronology shows how the action of the film is arranged in respect of time. *Linear* is when the storyline is continuous. The plot of *Paradise Road* is seen is linear as it starts at a certain point in time and ends at a certain point in time. The films follows the action and events in order beginning on the 10th of February 1942 at a ball in Singapore and ends on the 24th of August 1945 with the women being set free. Therefore the action takes place over a period of nearly four years. Unlike a novel, a film is divided into scenes rather than chapters, but each containing the same purpose.

**Continuity**

Films do not tell everything that has happened in a certain period of time, and the director will only include information or detail that he/she deems to be important or relative. Nevertheless, there must be *continuity within* the narrative. This means the viewer perceives consistency in the characters, events, experiences and places. This allows the events in the film to flow logically and smoothly despite breaks of time. *Paradise Road* possesses continuity as the experiences, characters and events have been grouped together according to thematic relevance and experience. Some scenes protract the time, giving emphases to a specific event or conversation; whereas other scenes compress the time, condensing many events into a short scene.
Style

Orientation (Point of View, Voice)

This is about who is telling the story. The film *Paradise Road* is told in first person, with the narrator referring to herself as ‘I’. The audience therefore are only privy to the information the narrator shares.

Being Australian herself, the Australian point of view is presented. This allows the narrators insight, experiences and opinions to be presented and this therefore can be seen as a way in which to persuade the reader. It may be said that this form of narrative is biased as other points of views are omitted.

Impartiality

Writers aim to influence their readers in a variety of ways. Some may aim to influence favourably, while others unfavourably. They achieve this through making assertions or assumptions about the subjects or people they address. It is important to note that they choose what information is given and in how much detail. Writers can omit what they don’t want to address.

*Paradise Road* shows some true reflections of life in a prisoner of war camp, the story can be told in such a way that the reader’s emotions are brought to the forefront. Here the reader can empathise with characters or feel a sense of disgust towards characters. In this film the Japanese are presented as the Antagonists and the women in the camp the Protagonists.

Non-fiction vs. Fiction

*Paradise Road* is classified as non-fiction. This means that the stories are not inventions of the imagination, but the events of the story have actually happened. The purpose of the narration is to give facts about the events that have happened. Here, the writer does not choose the incidents of the story because the events have in fact taken place. However, the writer has the choice in how they depict or represent events, situations or characters. This is still a cinematic technique as it has a purpose, allowing a bias effect on the way the reader interprets the story. For example, a major historical event was the shooting of people when arriving on the shore of Sumatra. However, the director has chosen to exclude this from the film, and rather, focus on experiences inside the Prisoner of War Camp.
Pathos

The director evokes pathos for his characters as their pain and struggle are heavily woven into the plot and events that occur. The director presents these characters with sensitivity and compassion. *Paradise Road* stirs pathos in its viewers, wanting the women to be set free, transcending the misery and ill health they endure from the Japanese.

War film

There are many film genres, one of which being war film. All film genres include dramatic elements and focus on the in-depth development of realistic characters dealing with emotional struggles. The War films genre however, is concerned with warfare (naval, air or land battles), often focusing on prisoners of war or other related subjects. War films either focus on military or civilian life in wartime, and in the case of *Paradise Road* the film genre focuses primarily on civilian life in the POW camp. War films may be based on fiction, history, or docudrama. A sub-genre of war films is Anti-war films. Anti-war films portray war in a negative way, showing the horror and pain, often from a political or ideological perspective. Most films that show prisoners of war are seen in this light and therefore come under this classification. Often war films can also have the sub-genre of historical drama as the events and characters are based on historical events and famous people. Here the film attempts to accurately portray these real life events, though often add an element of fiction in order to make the story more appealing to the viewer.

Music

Music permeates the film and becomes a symbol of the grief and triumph the characters face. The music in the film is also emblematic of the emotions characters are experiencing. The songs which they sing are a testament to the serious, miserable and desperate emotional state they are in. Though their music is also their inspiration and tool to enhance their determination, hope and willpower to survive; while also being a form of escape. Furthermore, their choir is a manner in which they can confront the Japanese, demand some rights and gain some dignity.
Major and Minor Characters

A character is a person who exists in a text, narrative or film. There are two types of characters—major characters and minor characters. Major characters are involved in the central and most often climatic point of the action. The viewer therefore learns about these characters in more depth. They learn of their attitudes, approach to life, motivations and typical behaviour. Minor characters however, are not focused on exclusively. They are often there as a foundation to help establish the story of the main character. Nevertheless, they are important as they help shape and extend the plot.

Protagonists and Antagonists

Films often have characters who oppose each other and experience conflict or tension in some way. These characters are often seen as foes or enemies, and can often be seen as the good guy and the bad guy. The one driving or creating the conflict is seen as the antagonist. The character who is the victim of this conflict is seen as the protagonist. The storyline and major events in Paradise Road present the Australian, New Zealand and British as the protagonists and the prejudice of the Japanese enemies as the antagonists.

Author’s attitude

The director uses specific words and descriptions to present their attitude or stance on the action taking place or towards other characters. This may be presented covertly (secretly) or overtly (openly). Through the words and phrases chosen, many connotations are brought forth, and these strongly influence the point of view of the reader. The director of Paradise Road has written the narrative in such a way that the viewer clearly observes who is ‘right’ and who is ‘wrong’. As stated above, it is important to note that the captive held women are portrayed positively.
**Major characters**

**Adrienne Pargiter**

**Status**

When she first arrives in Sumatra and is taken by the Japanese, Adrienne states the laws of the Geneva Convention. This immediately displays her knowledge and confidence to stand up for what is right. We soon find out Adrienne is a British graduate from the Royal Academy of Music, she becomes the conductor of the orchestral women’s choir. She is also a British wife of a tea planter. One night on the way to the privy she is grabbed by a Sergeant Tomashi who is drunk. In trying to fight him off she causes him to fall in the privy which brings others running to witness his embarrassment. Consequently Adrienne is locked in a wooden cage. The next morning Captain Tanaka instructs Adrienne that a Japanese soldier would never treat a lady in this way and offers the alternative story that she refused to bow to Sergeant Tomashi who ‘rightfully’ struck her and when she retaliated he fell into the privy. She refuses to endorse this version of events so is beaten resulting in broken ribs. She demonstrates her strength of character and integrity by still refusing to lie and hence is sentenced to be executed. The other girls intervene on her behalf visiting Colonel Hirato and berating him for the treatment of prisoners and appealing to him to exercise control and intervene which he does. After becoming closer to Margaret Drummond she apologises for her snobbery and states, "We never mixed with missionaries in Singapore, we were told to look down on them."

**Circumstances**

Her leadership and defiance towards the Japanese (based on her insistence to carry on the choir despite the expected consequences) offers the other women hope and inspiration not to give up. After the concert, Sergeant Tomashi leads her into the woods, suggesting to the audience she will be raped or killed, finishing off what he had attempted previously before being exposed by her and for organising the choir. Yet we soon discover he wants to sing for her approval.

**Motivations**

Her motivation is to lift the morale of the camp and offer them hope and power through the choir.

**Behaviour**

Adrienne is enthusiastic, hopeful, passionate, brave, courageous and knowledgeable.
Susan Macarthy

Status
An Australian nursing student.

Circumstances
Susan, with the help of Dr Verstak discovers her true inner strength. Susan then made to kneel in front of sharp wooden stakes in the hope of her fall and consequential death. She manages to survive but is left exhausted, humiliated and nearly killed, she maintains her manners, self-confidence and humour, stating “I knew he was bluffing.” Her determination and persistence is used as inspiration for the women prisoners and elicits sympathy and respect from the Japanese soldiers. Susan’s holy aura when singing at the concert softens the hearts of both the Japanese captors and fellow women.

Motivations
In the first scene in Singapore Susan was motivated to help with the war and can’t comprehend why nurses are being sent away when they could be helping. After their ship is bombed and the women make their way to the shore, Susan displays pessimism stating “at least the water isn’t cold.” Susan’s motivation is to be set free from the camp, continue her studies in nursing, and to gain the courage to stand up to her parents and follow her own dreams. Dr Verstak questions why after the war she won’t go to medical school and it is revealed that it is because Susan’s father wants her back at the station to work on the land. We realise that her father never wanted her to do nursing and by the end of the film she has been given the guidance and courage to follow in her own dreams.

Behaviour
Timid yet finds her voice and soon displays strength, predominantly in scenes where her dignity or life is at stake. She displays strength when yelling at the Japanese stating, "You’re starving and beating women and children, you steal our Red Cross parcels for yourselves, you don’t give any medicine for the sick. You make us work like slaves, you don’t let us write to our families, and you have the cheek to lecture us on good manners!" While singing in the choir Susan cried for their freedom.
Dr Verstak

Status

Dr Verstak is a German Jew refugee. Within the confinements of the camp, Doctor Verstak becomes the doctor of the Prisoner of War camp. We realise later in the film she is not actually a doctor of medicine but a doctor of philosophy.

Circumstances

When the other women find out she is German, they treat her as an outsider stating, “so you’re on their side.” Throughout the movie they question her loyalty but soon trust her. She extracts gold teeth from dead women’s mouths in order to sell to the Japanese in exchange for medicine and whiskey. When Susan is placed in front of the wooden stakes, Dr Verstak talks to the Japanese translator. She asks him to tell Captain Tanaka, "If the Japanese lose, the treatment of this young woman may mean they may hang him." She explains that by being German she is an Ally to the Japanese; however her loyalty lies with Susan and the women of the camp. After this Captain Tanaka decides not to behead Susan.

Motivations

To obtain the necessary medicine, alcohol and other items needed in order to help the women’s survival. She is also motivated to offer guidance and strength to Susan. Dr Verstak’s is motivated to act as a medical doctor as the Japanese gain trust in her and the women hope in her ability to save lives.

Behaviour

Strong, charismatic and brash.
Dr Verstak is no-nonsense, tough, stiff and cynical. She becomes a maternal figure who offers good advice to Susan. She scoffs at other women when they state the war will be over by Christmas, showing her maturity and worldly knowledge.
Margaret “Daisy” Drummond

Status

A Christian missionary who copies the orchestra’s sheet music from memory.

Circumstances

Toward the end of the movie Daisy passes away and her friend Adrienne is very distraught. Adrienne reads her a bible passage and Daisy replies “That is all I wanted” before her untimely death.

There is a funeral for her and we see the Japanese men take their hats off in respect for the one who sang. The Japanese still tell them they can’t sing, the women clap and pick up rocks to hit together and some even use their shoes, making music using such objects.

Motivations

To raise the spirits of the women in the camp.

Behaviour

When Adrienne and Daisy talk about the Japanese soldiers, Adrienne asks Daisy, "You don’t hate them do you? Why not?" Daisy replies “I’ve tried but I just can’t bring myself to hate people. The worse they behave the sorrier I feel for them." This displays Daisy’s kind, sympathetic and humble nature towards all people.
Rosemary Leighton

Status

A stunning young model who dreams of being reunited with her true love Dennis.

Circumstances

After being taken out of the camp and put on a train, Rosemary sees Dennis being beaten, bashed and captured. She then loses all hope, stating "You’ll never get out of this. None of us will ever leave Sumatra." She believes she has no reason to live as he was her motivation to keep up hope. The other women try to raise her spirits telling her "Don’t give up now. Dennis wouldn’t want that." The women go to tell Dr Verstak that Rosemary is ill. Dr Verstak states she is dying because she no longer wants to live "Sometimes God reaches down and pulls the wings off his butterflies." They decide that in the next few days she will be down Paradise Road, their expression for death. One of the women states that “If I fall in love I hope it is like that.”

Motivations

To be reunited with her lover Dennis.

Behaviour

Gentle, quiet, smitten with Dennis, easily persuaded, survives only through the hope of seeing Dennis again.
**Minor characters**

Often the minor characters in these short stories help to establish the story and events that revolve around the main character. Some examples of how these minor characters help extend and enhance the narrative are as follows:

**Topsy Merritt**

Topsy Merritt is an American socialite - the only American in the camp. At the ball in Singapore, Topsy seems less naive than the other characters stating that the Japanese are powerful and should not be underestimated as they conquered Pearl Harbour. She is tempted to go with the Japanese as a means to survival asking if there is hot water and soap. When the other women put her down for even considering going with the men she questions them, "Are you asking me to give up food and soap and God knows what else to starve and sing?" Convinced by the women she chooses to ‘starve and sing’ and hold on to her dignity. At one point Topsy also contemplates escaping the camp but is convinced by the other women it is too risky.

**Mrs Roberts**

Snobby upper-class woman who clings to her beloved dog which is eventually shot by the Japanese. Endearingly insufferable woman. We realise she is very quick to judge others, stating that the Asian girl killed was probably trading in some oriental business. Yet Mrs Roberts is put in her place by her daughter Cecilia who tells her that she was trading to get medicine for her. When told by Adrienne she sang too early she denies it and blames the other women. Dying on the train, Mrs Robert's says to her daughter "I am sorry I won’t get to see your dear father again. I have so much to tell him." This suggests she has developed compassion and realises her flaws.
Important Quotations and Passages

- Topsy Merritt: “You want me to give up food and soap and God knows what else, so I can starve and sing?”
- Margaret Drummond: “I just can’t bring myself to hate people. The worse they behave, the sorrier I feel for them.”
- Sister Wilhelminia: “Well I’m a nun not a saint!”
- Margaret Drummond: “The will to survive is strong, stronger than anything.”
- Dr Verstak: “Sometimes God reaches down and pulls the wings off his butterflies.”
- Other female Prisoner of War: “If I fall in love I hope it is like that.”
- Mrs Roberts: "I am sorry I won’t get to see your dear father again. I have so much to tell him.”
- Rosemary Leighton: "You’ll never get out of this. None of us will ever leave Sumatra."
- Daisy: “That is all I wanted.”
- Dr Verstak: "If the Japanese lose, the treatment of this young woman may mean they may hang him.”
- Other female Prisoner of War: “Well then you’re on their side aren’t you?” (To Dr Verstak in reference to her being German).
- Susan Macarthy: "You're starving and beating women and children, you steal our Red Cross parcels for yourselves, you don't give any medicine for the sick. You make us work like slaves, you don't let us write to our families, and you have the cheek to lecture us on good manners!"
- Adrienne Pargiter: "We never mixed with missionaries in Singapore, we were told to look down on them."
- Susan Macarthy: “I knew they were bluffing.”
- Susan Macarthy: “I said nice weather we are having.” (Mocking the Japanese when caught talking).
- Pompous man at the Singapore ball: "They're crossed eyed and can't even see into their guns." (In reference to the Japanese).
- Susan Macarthy: "He can’t mean us, they're gunna need us.” (When told they had to leave Singapore for safety).
- Pompous man at Singapore ball: "Now we know. They can see which we were told they couldn't, they can fight which we were told they couldn't and they’re here which we were told they would never be."
- Susan Macarthy: "We have been in Singapore for two months and now that they really need nurses we’re leaving."
- Topsy Merritt: "I saw the reports on what the Japs did to the nurses in Hong Kong."
- Susan Macarthy: "Could be worse I suppose. The water could be cold."
Susan Macarthy: "Must be Sumatra. It’s amazing how everyone has just disappeared."

Japanese Soldier: "What can I say but attacking the enemy is a characteristic of war."

Colonel Hirota: "I am Colonel Hirota and I am in command of this place..

Dr Verstak: “The English don’t invite Jewish refugees to the cricket club. My husband and me we are doctors in asian hospital."

Daisy Drummond: "It is our Paradise Road."

(repeated)Adrienne Pargiter: "Our appreciation of the Japanese culture is at a low ebb."

Mrs Roberts: "What kind of people will be in this group dear?"

Mrs Roberts: “Who knows what kind of contraband she was trading in.”

Japanese soldier: "Japanese officer look for volunteer to walk him proud. They will have plenty of food."

Japanese soldier: "Ladies who stay in beautiful house are told to walk in certain direction."

Topsy Merritt: "You know we’ve got bucklies chance of getting through the war in that camp. You think I want to end up in some shallow grave in Sumatra."

Dr Verstak: "It will keep the ladies busy and that is good."

Other female Prisoner of War: "There’s going to be trouble. The Japs won’t take this lying down."

Captain Tanaka: "American imperialists have been removed from many pacific islands. Australia bombed many time and government want to make peace with Japan. Churchill and Roosevelt number ten. Emperor Hirohito son of heaven number 1."

(repeated)Adrienne Pargiter: "That’s one to tell your grandchildren"

Daisy: "We need the orchestra up and started again. Show the Japanese we are still alive, still got some spirit left."

Japanese soldier: "Once more we can be friends. I have done my best for you. I know not enough, but I could do no more."

Dr Verstak: "Yes and no. My husband is a medical doctor. I am a doctor of philosophy.”
TEXT 2: EVERY MAN IN THIS VILLAGE IS A LIAR

Historical Issues

9/11 (September 11, 2001)

On this date there were four coordinated terrorist attacks against the USA by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda. The attacks occurred in New York and Washington DC.

In the most publicized and remembered attack, two passenger jets were hijacked and were then deliberately crashed by the hijackers, in a suicide attack, into the two towers of the World Trade Centre in New York; one into the North tower, and the other into the South tower. The aircraft belonged to American Airlines and United Airlines. The crashes caused fires in both towers, and the towers then completely collapsed less than two hours later. The collapses and the fires they caused also damaged or destroyed all other buildings in the WTC complex itself, and considerable damage was also caused to ten other buildings in the vicinity.

Another passenger jet was flown to the Pentagon building in the state of Virginia, south of New York. This building is the headquarters of the US Department of Defence. Its deliberate crash into the building caused partial damage to one side. This aircraft was also operated by American Airlines.

The fourth hijacked passenger jet was intended by the hijackers to be crashed into the White House Washington DC, also south of New York on the Virginia/Maryland border. However, it crashed into the countryside in the state of Pennsylvania while en route. It seems that the passengers on board had attempted to overcome the hijackers, causing the aircraft to crash before arriving at the intended target. This aircraft was also operated by United Airlines.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed in these hijackings, 19 of the dead were the actual hijackers themselves. The efforts of the firefighters reacting to the attacks often involved very high risks to personal safety, to the extent that this was the deadliest firefighter emergency in American history.

Al-Qaeda initially denied involvement. However, about three years later Osama Bin Laden, their leader, admitted responsibility. He claimed his reasons were: American support for Israel, sanctions against Iraq, and the stationing of American military in Saudi Arabia.

As a result, the US commenced its ‘War on Terror’, with the support of friendly nations. They invaded Afghanistan to remove the Taliban from the nation’s leadership, who had been actively protecting Al-Qaeda.
The attacks also caused many countries to review and strengthen their own anti-terrorism laws. The USA formed an entirely new security organization called the Department of Homeland Security.

The USA was particularly concerned about bringing Bin Laden to justice. At first quite elusive, he was eventually tracked to a hiding place in Pakistan, about ten years later, in 2011. A covert operation by the American military based in Afghanistan flew there in two military helicopters to capture him. However, he was killed during the operation. His body was returned to Afghanistan for identification, and he was subsequently buried at sea, within 24 hours of his death, after full funeral rites were given according to his Islamic faith.

The effects of the attacks were widespread at the time, and encompassed much more than the deaths of innocent people and the destruction of buildings. New York is a global financial centre, and financial markets around the world were adversely affected by the resultant week-long closure of the New York stock exchange. Civilian airspace was also closed for several days in both the USA and Canada causing hardship for travellers and airlines. Many people also cancelled flights out of concern, and also out of respect.

It took longer than a year to completely clean up the WTC site. The damage to the Pentagon was repaired sooner.

Several memorials have been made to the attacks, in New York, the Pentagon, and Pennsylvania.

A new World Trade Centre is being constructed on the original site, and it is scheduled to be opened by early 2014.

Source: various internet sources
Author Notes

Megan Stack began as a journalist at the Los Angeles Times. She joined their office in Houston, Texas. She has since been based in Iraq, Egypt, Afghanistan, and many other countries. When the 9/11 attacks happened, she went to Afghanistan to report. She has reported on war in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Yemen, Israel, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

In 2006, she won the Overseas Press Club of America's Hal Boyle Award for international reporting. In 2007 she was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting. She currently works for the Los Angeles Times as their bureau chief in Beijing, China.

Every Man in this Village is a Liar was published in 2010. It is her first book and is based on her experiences.

Source: various internet sources
Themes and Issues

These are the issues, messages and insights into life that that the author wishes to address, and which gives the various stories their sense of unity. However, there can also be issues and messages in stories that readers may devise for themselves.

Themes may be presented directly or indirectly.

When dealing with themes, look for the issues which the author seems to confirm in his/her writing – these are things that he will deal with positively. Look for issues which he/she seem to challenge [disagree with in some way], as he/she will probably not deal with these positively.

A list of possible themes would be almost endless, and a single text will address only a few. Themes often involve the nature of some kind of conflict, which may be intra-personal, inter-personal, intra-national, inter-national, passive and/or active, and its traumatic effects and moral implications and outcomes.

The Nature of Conflict

Stack finds that people accept the inevitability of war, in other words, that it is virtually a natural part of life, and so they believe that there is nothing that they can do about it. They are used to war being a normal part of life.

Gender Issues

Stack is confronted by the secondary status of women in many of the countries she visits. One such incident is the lives of American women in Saudi Arabia, who live in secure compounds and who know very little about what goes on outside of them, as they attempt to recreate American homes within the compounds. They isolate themselves from outside conflict – Stack observes - ‘they do not know what I know because they have not lived outside the gate.’

Women are treated as second-class citizens in many of the countries that Stack visits. In Saudi Arabia she cannot understand how men cannot see the inferior status of women, and she struggles with what she experiences. She almost sarcastically points out, while observing a rally in Egypt, that they depart from it ‘people first, women second.’

Impartiality and Indifference

As a journalist, Stack must report on what she sees and experiences. This requires her to maintain a kind of observational indifference – she must report as impartially as possible, and so she must not let her emotions affect her work, or even her personal reactions. In the ruined Lebanese town that
she visits, Stack’s control over her emotions becomes loosened, and she finds it difficult to deal with the situation when she actually tries to help someone.

There is also an indifference in the readers of news reports and other works about such conflict. They are told about what is going on in some place that is far away. They may be glad that they do not live there. They may be glad that they do not have those problems themselves. They may be critical of those involved, that there is some kind of deficiency in their attitudes, values and beliefs that they allow these events to happen and continue. They may feel that something has to be done to stop the conflict. However, they remain distant observers, physically and emotionally detached from the real situation.

Atwar, the Iraqi journalist, however, is not able to maintain the emotional distance from the conflict in her own country. She is worn down by it and is eventually killed as a result of the violence

Title

*Every Man in this Village is a Liar*

Sub-Title

*An Education in War*

A text’s title – and its sub-title, if there is one – can often be revealing: what it tells about itself. It may give direct and/or indirect indications of genre, and also of aspects of plot, characters and/or themes.

- Firstly, the Title is self-contradictory, as if everyone in the village is a liar, then the speaker is telling the truth, which means that everyone in the village is *not* a liar. The Title is a variation of an old philosophical problem known as the Epimenides Paradox: ‘all Cretans are liars.’ But as Epimenides himself is a Cretan, therefore, logically, all Cretans are not liars. So there is a problem with self-reference in logic.
- However, at a practical level, it could also be that every man actually is a liar, including the speaker, as his observation about all the men in the village is the only truth that he will tell.
- The title also refers to personal attitudes to war, essentially that people accept its inevitability and so believe that they can do nothing about it (that is, lie to themselves).
- In any event, the title shows the effects that war has on people who are affected by it.
- The Sub-title is a reference to what the author has learned about war.

Genre

This is the kind of story that is being told [for example, science fiction, historical, etc].

- Biography (Memoir).

Memoir is a genre of non-fiction. It is regarded as a subcategory of autobiography. A memoir comprises the memories that a person writes about of the events that occurred during his/her life, in which he/she was involved or he/she observed happen. The events of a memoir are regarded as basically factual. However, the memoir’s first person point of view is regarded as a personal
memory and personal interpretation of those events and, as such, they are not regarded as objective history as may be found in a more formal biography. While a biography will encompass a person’s entire life and attempt to be objective, a memoir may address only a part of a person’s life and offer entirely personal attitudes towards those events. Every Man In This Village Is a Liar offers the author’s personal perspective on the events that she has experienced and has chosen to relate in the memoir.

As Every Man in this Village is a Liar is only a personal memoir, it is very important for the reader to keep a perspective: it is only the opinions of a single person and her experiences. While her experiences are based on historical events, there is still no need to regard her opinions that she draws from those events as being factual.
Structure
This is how the novel is put together. It is related to chronology.

This memoir is written in 18 relatively short chapters, each describing an experience and thoughts. Each chapter is titled. The memoir takes its title from the name of Chapter 1.

Continuity
Even as a memoir the author will write only about those things that she feels are important and need to be included. So not every memory will be recorded in the memoir, but only those which she feels are important to the particular themes that she wishes to address.

Chronology
This is how the course of the stories is arranged in respect of time. The memoir is linear, in the sense that it follows her experiences and her thoughts as she visits each of the several countries that she writes about.

Setting [the world of the stories]
Stories have a setting:

- Geographic location
  The places where the action takes place.
- Social context
  The social status of the characters and their attitudes and values.
- Historical context
  The historical period [or even the year(s)] when the action takes place.
- Economic context
  The economic circumstances of the society.
- Political context
  The political circumstances of the society.

Geographic locations
The memoir is set in the various countries that Stack visits, in order:

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<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<td>USA</td>
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<td>Libya</td>
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**Historical context:**
Modern times.

**Economic context:**
The world situation and the countries which the author visits as they are at the time of writing.

**Political context:**
The world situation and the countries which the author visits as they are at the time of writing.

**Social status of the characters:**
The author – a journalist for a major American newspaper.
The various people whom the journalist meets during her time in each of the countries.

**Significance of the setting**
Apart from America, the countries that Stack visits are the ones who have direct experience of war. In many instances they are places where war, in one form or another, has been waged for so long that it has virtually become a way of life for the people.
**Summaries**

*Chapter 1: Every Man In The Village Is Liar*
Afghanistan is a country of fighting, confusion and deception. It seemed that everyone was lying and that no one could be trusted, so appearances were very deceptive. People were afraid. There were spies, and no-one knew really what was going on. People who had been pacifist were dragged into the war. The warlords also trafficked heroin. There was death and destruction on the streets. The hospitals were overcrowded and, as there was no access to medicine or proper care, patients died.

*Chapter 2: Chasing Ghosts*
A tribal conference was called to divide power in Afghanistan. The USA wished the citizens to believe that they were free because of US intervention. The warlords expected to receive money and weapons from the Americans. Women were seriously oppressed during the Taliban years – they had no rights.

*Chapter 3: As Long As You Can Pay For It*
Stack found it difficult to readjust to life in America as she believed that what they were being told about the War On Terror was not true. She felt that the War On Terror was actually not real at all. It was important to find Bin Laden because he was the leader of Al-Qaeda and also the symbol of terrorist evil. Stack’s family were curious about her experiences when away. While back home she felt restless and confused.

*Chapter 4: Terrorism and Other Stories*
In March 2002, Israel launched Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank to stop the deaths that were the result of terrorist suicide bombings. Stack received hate mail because she had a story published about how morgues were becoming overcrowded with suicide bombers’ bodies. However, Stack also likes to live in Israel. She enjoys the climate and appreciates the environment and the local people. She feels that because we are on the supposed ‘good side’ that we are able to justify the war.

*Chapter 5: Forgive Us Our Trespasses*
After Saddam Hussein was found guilty and the death sentence was carried out, there was an upsurge in violence – suicide bombings and massacres.

*Chapter 6: The Living Martyr*
The Shiite pilgrims were marching to Karbala, to the tomb of Imam Hussein. They would march for days. John, the photographer, does not like Iraq because of the destruction and death – and also because he thinks that the people are lazy because they simply accept what is happening.

*Chapter 7: The Leader*
Stack compares Saddam with Libya’s Gaddafi, and believes that both were ruthless, but that Saddam was regarded as worse because he goaded the American government much more. Life in Libya was oppressive, as there was no freedom and people were afraid of being spied upon, reported on, and then tortured. Stack believes there was some cooperation between Libya and America for economic reasons.
**Chapter 8: Sacrifice**
Stack felt that she was becoming sickened by the violence she was witnessing, as it seemed never-ending, especially the suicide bombings.

**Chapter 9: We Expected Something Better**
Stack feels that the news about Abu Ghraib prison was shocking, that prisoners were tortured. She decides that a united Arab nation would benefit from being able to protect itself from America. She regards Jordan as being spy-ridden.

**Chapter 10: A Question of Cost**
Stack finds that Saudi Arabia is changing. Where it once used to be a safe haven, there are now terrorist attacks. Saudis blame extremist Jihadists. Stack is refused a seat in a Starbucks because only men are allowed in – women and children are put in a hidden back section. She comments about the treatment of women in Saudi Arabia – they have no rights and are not regarded as equal.

**Chapter 11: Loddi, Doddi, We Likes To Party**
This chapter is titled after a Snoop Dog song. Houthi was a Zaydi Shiite cleric who led a group of guerrillas in a rebellion against their government. Stack found it difficult to get about in Yemen because of silence and deception.

**Chapter 12: A City Built On Garbage**
Hariri is a wealthy man who came into power after the civil war in Lebanon. He was assassinated in a bombing in 2005. Israel also had issues with its neighbour Lebanon.

**Chapter 13: The Earthquake Nobody Felt**
Stack finds that people have become so used to destruction – war and bombings – that they are just numb to it.

**Chapter 14: All Things Light And All Things Dark**
The bombing of Samarra was very important because it had always been a holy place. Stack finds that ‘Atwar had loyalty and love of country. She had great expectations. She was just another senseless victim, a sacrifice like so many others.’ The description of her life is also the description of Iraq itself. After Atwar’s death, security was tightened and people needed body guards, as life had become very dangerous.

**Chapter 15: There Would Be Consequences**
Another war began in Lebanon when Hezbollah guerrillas crossed the Israeli border to attack a couple of Israeli Humvees.

**Epilogue**
The Epilogue accentuates the ever-pervading nature of war.
Participants (Characters)

A character is any person who appears in a text. Characters can be people, and can also be animals, gods, aliens or inanimate objects – anything that has an actual impact on the action. Characters are almost always at the centre of the text.

There are major characters and minor characters. Major [primary] characters carry most of the action and are usually more rounded than minor [secondary and tertiary] characters: the reader learns a great deal more about their world view [attitudes and values], motivations and behaviour. Minor characters carry less of the action, but are still important in their own way.

Aspects of characterization

The author’s own appearance, world view, motivations and behaviour.

The attitudes, motivations and behaviour that other characters display towards him.

What the author states and implies about them.

Characters, like people, can be very complex; they have strengths and weaknesses, they face challenges, they achieve and fail, they undergo a range of emotional feelings, they think, speak and do. Like people, they can think and behave in ways that are unpredictable or never fully understood by others.

Author’s attitude

Characters do not exist in a moral vacuum. Consider the author’s attitudes towards them – this will be revealed in the words that she uses to describe them, their actions, their attitudes and values and the dialogue they exchange. It may be covert as well as overt, using words and phrases for their connotations as well as their denotations. The reader should also consider his/her own attitudes to the participants of the stories – he/she may agree or disagree with aspects of the author’s attitudes.

Because Every Man in this Village is a Liar is a memoir, and therefore concerned with real historical people, it is better to refer to them as participants, as they discuss and give their views of the historical events that occurred and that directly involved them.

First-Person Narrator

As a memoir, Every Man in this Village is a Liar is the First Person narration of the memories of events experienced by the author. The reader knows only what is related by the author. While the perspective of the memoir is narrow, as everything is being observed through the eyes of only the author, the First Person voice offers a sharp and precise focus, especially on the feelings, opinions, and perceptions of the author, and how he/she sees the world and the views of the other participants. Further, the reader also feels part of the story because it is read in the First Person 'I'.

Note

This text is rather different from others to the extent that there is only one consistent participant, being the author herself. She is not writing about people per se, but about situations. Therefore there is only one participant analysis that can be made.
**Participant**  
Megan Stack.

**Status**  
Author and protagonist (first person narrator).

**Role**  
The author of her own memoirs in which she wishes to address certain themes regarding war in the Middle East.

**Circumstances**  
She is an American journalist (see Author Notes).

**World view**  
She is quite pessimistic about the effects and outcomes of war.

Which creates

**Motivations**  
To explore the wars of the Middle East and her own attitudes to them.

Which lead to

**Behaviour**  
She writes a memoir about her experiences.

And may also lead to

**Development**  
She becomes quite pessimistic about the effects and outcomes of war.
**Important Quotations**

And I completely understand why people get addicted to war.

I was really shocked. And I was shocked when the US invaded Iraq. I didn’t think beforehand, I was just very naïve with the fact that it wouldn’t really happen, that we wouldn’t really as a country, go through with it.

I liked Israel, I liked living there. I liked the landscape; I liked the history of the place. You know, I grew up in a very Catholic family; we went to church every Sunday.

When I first went to Baghdad, the chaos was incredible, because there is that sense that the US Marines had just come in and taken over the airport and had deposed the government, and there was really no authority left. And it was almost unimaginable, this place that had such a very strict and defined sense of authority and power, and fear…

I didn’t know anybody there. Every place I went I was just surrounded as a Westerner, as a visible Westerner, people would just come up to you and they would think that you somehow represent the new authority. So people would come up and say, ask you all kinds of questions: ‘I’m looking for this missing person’, ‘I need a job’ ‘My power isn’t working’ ‘What’s going to happen?’ ‘Where do I go?’ ‘Who do I ask?’ and you just – it was just exhausting and Stack and really awful.

There was a problem with the corpses of the suicide bombers. They were piling up in the steel refrigerators of Israel’s morgue, and nobody could figure out what to do.

I love living in Israel, that was the hardest part. I loved it every time I climbed the dry heights of Masada and felt the desert wind and saw the Dead Sea gleam below, like spilt ink.

I was a reporter and I wanted to see. Only after covering it for years did I understand that the War on Terror never really existed, it was not a real thing.

Because they all had their stories, they all had – every family had scars, secret graves, people had just got erased from the world.

It was not that the War on Terror was flawed, not that it was cynical or self-defeating or likely to breed more resentment and violence, but that it was hollow. It was essentially nothing but a unifying myth for a complicated scramble of mixed impulses and social theories and night terrorism, cruelty of business interests, all overhung with the unassailable memory of falling skyscrapers.
Vocabulary and Concepts

Al Qaeda
An international Islamic organization which attacks military and civilian targets, with the aim of ending foreign influence in Moslem countries.

CIA
American government organization that gathers information about the activities of other nations, and also about the activities of individual people of interest.

Fundamentalism
The strict adherence to a basic set of principles or beliefs. The term is often used in reference to religions.

Hamas
A Palestinian Sunni Islamic organization which also has a military wing. It has formed the government in the Palestinian Parliament since 2006. This election win caused the Palestinian Civil War, between Hamas and its rival, Fatah, who both regard themselves as the true representatives of the Palestinian people. The USA, Israel, Canada, Japan and the European Union regard Hamas as a terrorist organization.

Hezbollah (from the Arabic – ‘Party of God’)
A Moslem political party and militia formed to oppose Israeli forces that have occupied south Lebanon.

Humvees
The High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), known as the Humvee. It is a four-wheel drive military vehicle. It serves as a troop carrier, cargo carrier, weapons platform, ambulance, missile carrier, prime mover, air support vehicle and other roles. There is also a civilian model (Hummer).

Islam
A religious faith, followed by Muslims, founded by the prophet Muhammad, and taught by the Koran.

Jihad (from the Arabic – ‘a conflict’)
A war that Moslems regard as holy and which must be undertaken as a sacred duty to defend the Islamic faith.

Koran
The central religious text of Islam. Moslems believe it to be a revelation from God and protected by God from distortion or corruption.
Laram
The 8th month of the Afghan calendar, of 30 days, from late October to late November.

Muslim Brotherhood
The Society of Moslem Brothers is an international religious and social movement. It aims to instil Islamic principles in the lives of individuals, communities and nations.

Ramadan
The 9th month of the Muslim year, of 30 days, during which strict fasting is observed from sunrise to sunset.

Salafi Creed
That the first three generations of Muslims, who were Muhammad’s companions, and the two generations after them, are examples of how Islam should be practiced.

Shia
The second-largest denomination of Islam, which believes that the prophet Muhammad’s son-in-law, Ali, is Muhammad’s successor in the Caliphate. The Caliphate is an Islamic state with a single political and religious leader (Caliph) who is regarded as the successor to all the Prophets of Islam.

Sunni Islam
The largest denomination of Islam, and also the largest denomination of any religion in the world. It is sometimes regarded as the orthodox version of Islam.

Zionism
A Jewish nationalist movement whose aim is to establish a Jewish state in an area of the Middle East that corresponds to geographical references of passages in the Bible.
People

Condoleezza Rice
An American political scientist and diplomat. She was the first African-American Secretary of State (under President George Bush), and the second woman to be so. She was the first woman National Security Advisor. Previously she was a professor of political science at Stanford University, and also Provost (a senior academic administrator).

Saddam Hussein
Vice-President of Iraq, and then President of Iraq from 1979-2006. Before becoming president he created security forces that kept tight control over conflict between the military and the government. He put oil companies under government ownership. He also took control of government-owned banks. He used oil income to expand the economy as quickly as possible. As President he suppressed Kurds and Shia Moslems. He started a war with Iran, over disputed territories, that lasted about 8 years. He was opposed to Israel. He gassed a Kurdish town in the north of the Iraq, killing 5,000 and maiming 10,000 more. He was regarded by western nations as a brutal dictator, though he was also given military and financial support as a means of preventing the spread of Iranian Shia Moslem radicalism. In 1990, Saddam invaded Kuwait and annexed the country, which was then comprehensively looted. Iraq was given a deadline to depart. Saddam refused. A coalition force led by the USA then attacked the Iraqi army and removed it. Believing that Saddam was attempting to develop weapons of mass destruction for active use (chemical weapons), Iraq was invaded in 2003, by a coalition of western nations, with a view to confiscating the weapons and removing Saddam from power. The invasion lasted less than three weeks. At first, neither chemical weapons nor Saddam could be found. He was eventually captured some months later, hiding in a hole at a farmhouse. He was put on trial in Iraq, for crimes against humanity, and he was found guilty. He was sentenced to death by hanging. He lodged an appeal against the convictions, but his appeal failed.

Muammar al-Gadaffi
He forcefully took power in Libya in 1969 and remained its ruler until 2011. His first title was Revolutionary Chairman of the Libyan Arab Republic, and then he became Brother Leader of the Great Socialist People’s Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. He began as a socialist, but then ruled Libya according to his own beliefs which he called the Third International Theory. His supporters appreciated his anti-imperialist views, but he was widely regarded as an oppressive dictator who regularly violated human rights and supported international terrorism. Gadaffi became a victim of the Arab Spring, a wave of demonstrations that occurred in a number of nations of the Middle East when ordinary citizens rose up against their oppressive governments. A civil war resultantly broke out in Libya, the citizens prevailed, the government fell, and Gadaffi was captured after moving continually about the country in an attempt to avoid capture. After his capture he was beaten and stabbed and, while accounts differ, he was possibly shot and his body was also reviled.

George Bush Snr
An American President during the period of Stack’s memoir. When Iraq invaded Kuwait he insisted on a complete withdrawal. When Saddam refused, Bush assembled a coalition of nations to remove the Iraqi forces, which they succeeded in doing.
George Bush Jnr
An American President during the period of Stack’s memoir, and son of President Bush Snr. After the September 11 attacks he declared a War on Terrorism. He ordered an invasion of Afghanistan to remove the Taliban, which occurred. He also ordered the invasion of Iraq to remove Saddam and confiscate the weapons of mass destruction that he was believed to be hiding.

Osama Bin Laden
A Saudi Arabian, the founder of Al-Qaeda, a militant Islamist and terrorist. He claimed responsibility for the September 11 attacks in America as well as numerous other attacks on both civilian and military targets which caused mass casualties. He managed to go into hiding for ten years after 9/11. However he was eventually found in Pakistan and he was killed during an attempt to bring him to justice.

Ariel Sharon
An Israeli politician and retired general. He is regarded as Israel’s greatest military commander because of his leadership in the 1967 Six Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and also as one of its greatest military strategists. He was Israel’s prime minister from 2001 to 2006. In 2003 he endorsed the Road Map For Peace which, in part, accepted a Palestinian state in the future. He also began an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. His Prime Ministership was ended prematurely by ill health.
Points to consider

- A passive approach to injustice is almost as bad as being the perpetrator of injustice.
- Everyone is good when times are great, but only a great person is good in times of conflict.
- All conflict stems from ineffective communication.
- We are not protected from conflict being thrust upon us even if we are pacifists.
- If we could understand that we are all unique and worthy, then there would be no conflict.
- We all dislike conflict, yet we seem to have no alternative way of being.
- Most conflict involves those with power abusing those who are powerless.
- We cannot hurt another human being without leaving a scar on ourselves.
- Conflict is always a result of fearing the different and the new.
- Conflict is a clash of expectations.
- Conflict is inevitable.
- We all take sides during times of conflict.
- Avoiding conflict can often lead to worse conflict later on.
- It is in times of conflict that we really discover who we are.
The part of the world where Stack’s memoir is set.

The most recognizable images of the USA – the flag and the Statue of Liberty. “The land of the free and the home of the brave.”
Encountering conflict

The Pentagon, after its attack on 9/11

The attack on the World Trade Centre Buildings, New York, 9/11
The results of a terrorist car bombing, Baghdad, Iraq

Bombed house, Lebanon
Some Saudi Arabian women have recently been agitating to be allowed to drive motor vehicles.

Australian soldier in Afghanistan
The West Bank
TEXT 3: LIFE OF GALILEO

Themes

Conflict between Dogma and Scientific Evidence

Since Ancient Greek times it had been commonly accepted that the Earth was at the centre of the Universe and that the Sun, the Moon and all the Stars were fixed to spheres which rotated around the earth. Outside these spheres was the Kingdom of Heaven. In the 4th Century B.C. Aristotle philosophised on the need for extra spheres to justify the movement of the stars and felt that their existence could be proved by mathematics.

http://www.physicsoftheuniverse.com/cosmological.html
In the 2nd Century A.D. Claudius Ptolemy combined commonly accepted theories with his own observations to establish a model which could accurately predict the position of a star to within 2°.

In 1543 Nicolaus Copernicus published a book proposing a Heliocentric model of the Universe where in fact the Sun was at the centre of the Universe and that all the planets revolved around it which would remove the 2° error but which was contradictory to established beliefs.

‘In 1610 Galileo Galilei used his telescope to observe the phases of Venus. Using what he observed about Venus and equating this to the moon he extrapolated that these phases would not be possible under a
Encountering conflict

Ptolemaic model of the Universe. Further to this the phases would be explained if the Heliocentric model of the Universe was adopted.

In Bertolt Brecht’s Play Life of Galileo, Brecht’s protagonist Galileo has a desire to educate the world. He has a strong belief in logic and humanity’s desire to know. When he is introducing Andrea to the armillary sphere to expand upon previous lessons, Galileo states that ‘everything is in motion’ (page 6) and uses the analogy of ships leaving the coast line which enabled the establishment of the fact that the world was round. Galileo feels that rejecting the dogmatic belief that the world was flat has left people open to accepting other changes in their world view. As he espouses “Soon humanity is going to understand its abode, the heavenly body on which it dwells. What is written in the old books is no longer good enough. For where faith has been enthroned for a thousand years doubt now sits. Everyone says: right, that’s what it says in the books, but let’s have a look for ourselves. The most solemn truths are being familiarly nudged; what was never doubted before is doubted now” (page 7). He states that the Ptolemaic model has “Lots of laws that explain very little, whereas our new hypothesis has a few laws that explain a lot” (page 8). “It is my prophecy that our own lifetime will see astronomy being discussed in the marketplaces. Even the fishwives’ sons will hasten off to school” (page 8.) He then reveals that it is important to him that Andrea understands his theories and that his motivation for discovery is getting people like Andrea to understand. It is for this reason that Galileo “writes his astronomical works not in Latin but in the idiom of fishwives and wool merchants” (page 92). He writes “in the language of the people, for the many, rather than in Latin for the few. Our new thoughts call for people who work with their hands. Who else cares about knowing the causes of things? People who only see bread on their table don’t want to know how it got baked; that lot would sooner thank God than thank the baker. But people who make the bread will understand that nothing moves unless it has been made to move” (pages 79-80.) He does not want education to be only the domain of a privileged few but wants everybody to have access to the truth. He also recognises that those who have had formal education have been indoctrinated with theories and are less likely to accept what he is saying.

In Scene 3 Galileo openly states his faith in reason and love of science in a debate with his friend Sagredo. “I believe in Humanity, which means to say I believe in human reason.” Sagredo replies “I don’t. Forty years spent among human beings has again and again brought it home to me that they are not open to reason.” Galileo is not receptive to these warnings because of an unshaken belief that, “Nobody who isn’t dead can fail to be convinced by proof” (page 29.)

Sagredo’s view of the world is reinforced in Scene 4 in the debate between advisors to Cosimo De Medici the Grand Duke of Florence and Galileo. Galileo believes they “could just look through the telescope and convince yourselves,” (page 38) but the logic that the group employs is that, “if your tube shows something that cannot be there, it cannot be an entirely reliable tube” (page 39) because “what is in your tube and what is in the skies is not necessarily the same thing” (page 40.) Galileo’s gamble of getting the support of the house of De Medici has failed because for many the dogma inherent in the current system of beliefs is too strong. Bellarmin informs Galileo “We have shifted the responsibility for such occurrences as we cannot understand – life is made up of them – to a higher Being, and argued that all of them contribute to the fulfilment of certain intentions, that the whole thing is taking place according to a great plan” (page 59.) He recognises that this does not please everybody but does not feel that this is justification for Galileo making wild accusations about what was written in the bible. As the argument continues Galileo notes that “what destroys faith is invoking it” (page 61.)
When the Inquisitor is requesting permission from the Pope to question Galileo, in Scene 12, the Pope originally refuses because he had “let him write his book on condition that he finished it by saying that the last word lay with faith, not science. He met that condition” (page 93.) The Inquisitor then points out that “His book shows a stupid man, representing the view of Aristotle of course, arguing with a clever one who of course represents Mr Galilei’s own: and which do you think , your Holiness, delivers the final remark?” (page 93.)

Conflict between The Individual and Society

In *Life of Galileo* Bertolt Brecht attempted to highlight the triumph of reason and knowledge and emphasise its victory over authoritarian oppression. Galileo ultimately gets his message through by smuggling out the book but he recognises that his recantation put on hold the progress he had made and allowed the Catholic Church's teachings and values to continue unquestioned. The message from Brecht is that we should put society before ourselves. As Galileo says in Scene 9, “someone who doesn’t know the truth is just thick-headed. But someone who does know it and calls it a lie is a crook” (page 70.) He almost allows Andrea to convince him that his own recantation was not a crime. He uses Andrea’s metaphor of his hands being “Better stained than empty. Sounds realistic. Sounds like me. New Science, new ethics” (page 106.) But then admits that it was not a plan but simply a desire to avoid physical pain. Andrea comforts him with “Fearing death is human. Human weaknesses don’t matter to science” (page 107.)

Brecht has consistently maintained that this play was not an attack on the Catholic Church per se. Galileo never once speaks out against the church itself “I am a faithful son of the Church…” (page 59.) The Church’s role in the play is representative of institutions and authority as a whole. Although the play is set in the past, it concentrates on presenting contemporary implications and consequences of the struggle between Galileo’s scientific discoveries and the extraordinary power and influence of the Catholic Church. Brecht wrote the first draft after Hitler’s triumphs in 1938 and much of the philosophical debate in the play can be seen as a comment on what was happening in Europe at the time. Brecht was rewriting the play in the United States when the first Atomic bomb was dropped in 1945 and it was at this time that he introduced the idea of a Hippocratic Oath for scientists. It is also interesting to note that when Brecht was working on the original version in Denmark in 1938 to understand the Ptolemaic cosmology he consulted the assistants of Niels Bohr who were conducting research on splitting the atom. The dropping of the Atomic bomb changed the focus of the play but as Brecht notes in the pre-amble to the American Version “we had only to make a few alterations – not a single one to the structure of the play.” It was finally rewritten in German in 1953 after the death of Stalin.
Encountering conflict

Conflict between the Intellectual and the Sensual

There are repeated references to food. Scene 1 begins with a washing, followed by a scientific demonstration and a small meal of bread and milk. In Scene 3 when justifying why he took credit for the invention of the telescope to gain an increase in his salary, Galileo tells Sagredo, “then I like buying books about other things besides physics, and I like a decent meal. Good meals are when I get most of my ideas” (page 26.) Conversely in Scene 4 Mrs Sarti wants to feed the representatives of the De Medici court “a proper joint of lamb, before they inspect his tube” (pages 34 -35) but Galileo does not think it necessary to feed them as he has something else which will satisfy them, that being the knowledge to enlighten them. In Scene 9 when visited by Ludovico, Galileo asks for wine to celebrate and expresses his taste for the wine. Galileo is noted for enjoying the finer things in life and he Inquisitor recognises this and uses it against him in Scene 12. The Inquisitor notes “Practically speaking one wouldn’t have to push it very far with him. He is a man of the flesh. He would give in immediately.” The Pope agrees noting that “He enjoys himself in more ways than any man I have ever met. His thinking springs from sensuality. Give him an old wine or a new idea, and he cannot say no” (page 93.) Galileo recants through fear of physical torture and allows his ideas to be quashed. Although he later recognises that the Inquisitor would not have done anything to harm him. The anonymous gift of some geese in Scene 14 brings comfort to Galileo in his final captivity. After describing his sense of self-loathing following his recantation, Galileo says demonstratively to Andrea, “I still enjoy eating” (page 109.)

Conflict between Appearance and Reality

Andrea has difficulty believing that the Sun stays still because he can see with his own eyes that the sun “goes down in a different place from where it rises” (page 9). This of course is the difference between appearances and reality, which Galileo demonstrates to him first with the chair and wash tub and then with the apple and sliver of wood. Two senior Cardinals make a similar statement to Galileo at the masquerade ball in Scene 7. Galileo uses an analogy to explain the difference between perception and what is actually occurring. “When I was so high – he indicates with his hand – your Eminence, I stood on a ship and called out ‘The shore is moving away.’ Today I realise that the shore was standing still and the ship was moving away” (page 57.) The fact that this conversation is occurring at a masquerade ball is a deliberate dramatic technique used by Brecht, as the people present wear masks to prevent their true identities from showing. This is reinforced when Barberini warns Galileo, “you too, my dear fellow, ought really to have come disguised as a good orthodox thinker. It’s my own mask that permits me certain freedoms today. Dressed like this I might be heard to murmur: If God did not exist we should have to invent him. Right let’s put on our masks once more. Poor old Galileo hasn’t got one”(page 61.)

There are many other characters who argue the importance of pretence. Galileo himself teaches the Ptolemaic system in Padua. He states to Sagredo in Scene 3 that he does not personally believe in the Ptolemaic system but has publicly supported it because up until now he has not had proof that it was wrong. In Scene 8 the little monk advises Galileo that allowing his parents who work in the field to have their faith comforts them. He argues that his parents don’t need to know the reality about the Universe, they need their faith to sustain them. Ludovico asserts a similar contention in Scene 9. Galileo ignores his advice and Ludovico calls off the wedding. The appearance of propriety and the public image projected by his family in church is more important than his own feelings.
It is only through deception that the Church is able to get Galileo to recant. While the reality is that they have no intention of torturing him, they show him the instruments of torture and give the appearance that they will. This is enough to convince him and of course, he recants because he “was afraid of physical pain” (page 107.)
Structure

*Life of Galileo* is a play in one Act. There are 15 scenes.

**Scene 1.** Padua, 1609, Galileo’s study – Galileo Galilei, a teacher at Padua sets out to prove Copernicus’s new cosmography

**Scene 2.** Venice, 1609, alongside the harbour – Galileo presents the Venetian Republic with a new invention

**Scene 3.** Padua, 10th January 1610, Galileo’s study – Using the telescope, Galileo discovers celestial phenomena that confirm the Copernican system. Warned by his friend of the possible consequences of his research, Galileo proclaims his belief in human reason

**Scene 4.** Florence, 1610, Galileo’s study – Galileo has exchanged the Venetian Republic for the Court of Florence. His discoveries with the telescope are not believed by the court scholars

**Scene 5.** Rome, 1616, early morning. Galileo’s study – Undeterred even by the plague, Galileo carries on with his researches

**Scene 6.** Rome, February 26th 1616, Hall of the Collegium Romanum in Rome. It is night-time – The Vatican research institute, The Collegium Romanum, confirms Galileo’s findings

**Scene 7.** Rome, March 5th 1616, a ball at Cardinal Bellarmine’s - But the Inquisitor puts Copernicus’s teachings on the Index

**Scene 8.** Rome, March 8th 1616, Florentine Ambassador’s Palace – A conversation

**Scene 9.** Florence, 1624, Galileo’s House – After keeping silent for eight years, Galileo is encouraged by the accession of a new Pope, himself a scientist, to resume his research into the forbidden area: the sunspots

**Scene 10.** An Italian city, 1632, a carnival – During the next decade Galileo’s doctrine spreads among the common people. Ballad-singers and pamphleteers everywhere take up the new ideas. In the carnival of 1632 many Italian cities choose astronomy as the theme for their guilds’ carnival processions

**Scene 11.** Florence, 1633, antechamber at the Medici Palace – The Inquisitor summons the world famous scientist to Rome

**Scene 12.** Rome, 1633 – The Pope

**Scene 13.** Rome, June 22nd, Florentine Ambassador’s Palace – before the Inquisition, on June 22nd 1633, Galileo recants his doctrine of the motion of the earth

**Scene 14.** Countryside near Florence, 1637, Galileo Galilei lives in a house in the country near Florence, a prisoner of the Inquisitor till he dies. The ‘Discorsi’

**Scene 15.** The Italian Frontier, 1637, Galileo’s book, the ‘Discorsi’ crosses the Italian frontier
Style

*LIFE OF GALILEO* is one of Brecht’s most significant plays. It occupied him for the last twenty years of his life and he produced three different versions refining and updating it as his circumstances changed whilst also using the play to comment on contemporary events. The first version, written in German, was produced in 1939 in Denmark while Brecht was in exile from Germany during World War II. The English version transpired towards the end of the war once he had moved to the United States. After the war and after Brecht had been brought before the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), where he was questioned about his Marxist beliefs, Brecht returned to Germany living in East-Berlin. While there he updated his play for a third time again writing in German.

Galileo was convinced that humanity was defined by its ability to reason. Much of the action of this play centres around arguments and philosophical debates between opposing parties. Similarly Brecht’s belief in reason was the fundamental element of his theatre. His theatre went against the old paradigm as established by Aristotle. He did not want his theatre to follow the traditional structure of storytelling which creates an atmosphere of escapism but instead wanted to create an ‘epic theatre’ which forced people to think about what was being presented to them and encouraged evaluation. To achieve this he wanted to constantly alienate the audience from the action so that they would critically assess the moral dilemmas they were being presented with. This alienation is achieved in many ways. Scenes are distinct from each other with many jumps in time. Often when there are significant time jumps the intervening action is narrated, either by characters or more often by narrators. Narration is used to fill in gaps between scenes or to comment on upcoming action before each scene. Brecht also projects important details to reinforce the main ideas and messages. Music is often used to comment on the action and is in fact the main element of Scene 10, a scene which is often left out of the play when it is performed, but it is included in our study. Props and sets are minimalistic so that the audience is not enchanted by what they are seeing, but rather focus on the action and the commentary to encourage thought and critical engagement with the ideals.
Major and Minor Characters

Galileo Galilei

Brecht’s protagonist Galileo has a desire to educate the world. Because of this he is constantly in conflict with the Church and with authority. Galileo is a forty-five-year-old lecturer at the University of Padua and a subject of the Republic of Venice. He lives with his daughter, Virginia; his housekeeper, Mrs. Sarti; and her bright son, Andrea, whom he enjoys instructing in his research of astronomy and physics. He is fat, self-indulgent, sensuous, and crafty. He is recognised by the Pope as a glutton for both old wine and new ideas. Galileo has a strong belief in logic and humanity’s desire to know. Galileo is presented not as a hero, but as a real and flawed human being. To overcome his financial difficulties he sells another man’s idea of a telescope which he claims is the result of seventeen years work but in actual fact, it had been described to him by a prospective student. He justifies this action by the fact that he improved upon the version which was described to him and also because the end of scientific discovery justifies the means, “When there are obstacles the shortest line between two points may be a crooked one” (page 106.) He treats the world as a scientific discovery and is constantly striving to understand it. He finds the world remarkable yet out-dated and in need of explanation. Galileo faces internal conflict relating to the fact that he wants to share his knowledge with the world and to bring enlightenment to the people, but he is scared by the threat of torture from the Inquisitor. Originally Galileo has some success in bringing Science to the people but ultimately he undermines any gains made when he recants.

Andrea Sarti

Andrea is a bright and inquisitive boy who has a thirst for knowledge and is one of Galileo’s greatest supporters. Consequently, when Galileo recants he subsequently becomes one of his most vocal critics, “No voice against you was louder than mine” (page 105.) Andrea experiences internal conflict when his idol Galileo, does not live up to the ideals which he had imparted to Andrea, that the search for truth is the most important aspect of life. Andrea agrees to smuggle Galileo’s latest text ‘The Discorsi’ across the border and sees it as redeeming Galileo for past crimes. Galileo argues that he is not a hero and no longer believes that we are on the edge of a new age and warns Andrea to be careful when going to Germany with the manuscript under his jacket. As he attempts to cross the border he educates some young boys telling them, “you should learn to use your eyes.” He then dissuades them of their superstitions about the old witch and the devil. Andrea is given the last words of the play when he states “We’re really just at the beginning” (page 113) indicating that he intends to continue Galileo’s work and bring enlightenment to the world.
Mrs. Sarti

Galileo’s housekeeper and Andrea’s mother. She is loyal to Galileo, supporting him and ensuring that he is grounded. She encourages him to take on extra students so that he can pay his bills. Mrs. Sarti moves with him when he decides to go to Florence and stays with him when everyone else evacuates because of the plague. She encounters conflict because she wants the best for her son and though she knows that Galileo is like a father figure to Andrea, she is also concerned as she knows Galileo’s teachings are dangerous. She is also worried because Andrea often repeats in public what he has learned from Galileo.

Ludovico Marsili

Ludovico is a rich young man who has been travelling the world, which included a visit to Holland. He comes to Padua at the insistence of his mother hoping to learn science from Galileo. He states that he has “not got the brains for science” (page 12) and is instead interested in horses. After Galileo appropriates his description of the telescope and sells it for his own advancement Ludovico cynically observes “I am starting to learn a thing or two about science” (page 22.) He becomes engaged to Virginia but faces conflict when Galileo insists on persisting with his research. Ludovico calls off the wedding as his family needs to be above reproach and he feels he cannot be associated with such a controversial figure as Galileo or his daughter.

Virginia

Virginia idolises her father and takes an interest in his work, yet he does not encourage her interest in his work claiming “she’s not bright” (page 26.) She constantly stands by Galileo. When he sends her to a nunnery during the plague she unsuccessfully attempts to leave the carriage so that she can stay with him. She subsequently escapes and returns to him. Even after her father destroys her chance of marriage to Ludovico whom she loves she stays by his side and tends to him while he is under house arrest by the Inquisitor.
**Important Quotations and Passages**

- **Galileo:** Because everything is in motion, my friend. I like to think that it began with the ships. As far as men could remember they had always hugged the coast, then suddenly they abandoned the coast line and ventured out across the seas (Scene 1 pages 6-7.)

- **Galileo:** Each day something fresh is discovered. Men of a hundred, even, are getting the young people to bawl the latest example into their ear. There have been a lot of discoveries, but there is still plenty to be found out. So future generations should have enough to do (Scene 1 page 7.)

- **Galileo:** Soon humanity is going to understand its abode, the heavenly body on which it dwells. What is written in the old books is no longer good enough. For where faith has been enthroned for a thousand years doubt now sits. Everyone says: right, that’s what it says in the books, but let’s have a look for ourselves. The most solemn truths are being familiarly nudged; what was never doubted before is doubted now (Scene 1 page 7.)

- **Galileo:** It is my prophecy that our own lifetime will see astronomy being discussed in the marketplaces. Even the fishwives’ sons will hasten of to school (Scene 1 page 8.)

- **Galileo:** I particularly want you to understand it. Getting people to understand it is the reason why I go on working and buying expensive books instead of paying the milkman. 
  **Andrea:** But I can see with my own eyes that the sun goes down in a different place from where it rises. So how can it stay still? Of course it can’t
  **Galileo:** You can see indeed! What can you see? Nothing at all. You just gawp. Gawping isn’t seeing (Scene 1 pages 8 – 9.)

- **Procurator:** When you’re selling knowledge you can’t ask more than the buyer is likely to make from it (Scene 1 page 16.)

- **Procurator:** Consider the conditions that surround us. The slavery under whose whips the sciences in certain places are groaning. Whips cut from old leather bindings. Nobody there needs to know how a stone falls, merely what Aristotle wrote about it. Eyes are only for reading with. Why investigate falling bodies, when it’s the laws governing grovelling bodies that count? (Scene 1 page 16.)

- **Galileo:** Lots of laws that explain very little, whereas our new hypothesis has a few laws that explain a lot (Scene 1 page 18.)

- **Sagredo:** Did you know about these Dutch instruments?
  **Galileo:** Of course, by hearsay. But the one I made these skinflints in the Signoria was twice as good. How am I supposed to work with the bailiffs in the house? And Virginia will soon have to have a dowry: she’s not bright. Then I like buying books about other things besides physics, and I like a decent meal. Good meals are when I get most of my ideas. A degraded age! They were paying me less than the carter who drives their wine barrels. Four cords of firewood for two courses on mathematics. Now I’ve managed to squeeze 500 scudi out of them, but I’ve still got debts, including some dating
Encountering conflict

from twenty years back. Give me five years off to research and I’d have proved it all. I’m going to show you another thing (Scene 3 page 26.)

- **Sagredo:** First and Foremost you’re a human being. And I am asking: where is God in your cosmography? (Scene 3 page 28.)

- **Galileo:** A tremendous difference. Look, Sagredo, I believe in Humanity, which means to say I believe in human reason. If it weren’t for that belief each morning I wouldn’t have the power to get out of bed

  **Sagredo:** Then let me tell you something. I don’t. Forty years spent among human beings has again and again brought it home to me that they are not open to reason. Show them a comet with a red tail, scare them out of their wits, and they’ll rush out of their houses and break their legs. But try to make one rational statement to them, and back it up with seven proofs, and they’ll just laugh at you.

  **Galileo:** That’s quite untrue, and it’s a slander. I don’t see how you can love science if that’s what you believe. Nobody who isn’t dead can fail to be convinced by proof (Scene 3 page 29.)

- **Galileo:** I was thinking you could just look through the telescope and convince yourselves? (Scene 4 page 38.)

- **Mathematician:** One might be tempted to answer that, if your tube shows something which cannot be there, it cannot be an entirely reliable tube, wouldn’t you say? (Scene 4 page 39.)

- **Mathematician:** If one could be sure of not over–exciting you one might say what is in your tube and what is in the skies is not necessarily the same thing (Scene 4 page 40.)

- **Mathematician:** Your instrument – I don’t know whether to call it your brainchild or your adopted brainchild – is most ingeniously made, no doubt of that (Scene 4 page 40.)

- **Federzoni:** Right, then let’s have new textbooks.

  **Philosopher:** Your highness, my distinguished colleague and I are supported by none less than the divine Aristotle himself (Scene 4 page 41.)

- **Philosopher grandly:** If Aristotle is going to be dragged in the mud – that’s to say an authority recognised not only by every classical scientist but also by the chief fathers of the church – then any prolonging of this discussion is in my view a waste of time. I have no use for discussions which are not objective. Basta.

  **Galileo:** Truth is born of the times, not of authority. Our ignorance is limitless: let us lop one cubic millimetre off it. Why try to be clever now that we at last have a chance of being just a little less stupid? I have had the unimaginable luck to get my hands on a new instrument that lets us observe on tiny corner of the universe a little, but not all that much, more exactly. Make use of it (Scene 4 page 42.)

- **Galileo:** I should say our duty as scientists is not to ask where the truth is leading us (Scene 4 page 42.)
• **Galileo:** You’ve got it wrong, my friend, quite wrong. If you live grandly enough you can afford to sweep the board. One has to move with the times, gentlemen. Not just hugging the coasts; sooner or later one has to venture out (Scene 7 page 56.)

• **Galileo:** When I was so high – *he indicates with his hand* – your Eminence, I stood on a ship and called out ‘The shore is moving away.’ Today I realise that the shore was standing still and the ship moving away (Scene 7 page 57.)

• **Bellarmin:** We have shifted the responsibility for such occurrences as we cannot understand – life is made up of them – to a higher Being, and argued that all of them contribute to certain intentions, that the whole thing is taking place according to a great plan. Admittedly this has not satisfied everybody, but now you come along and accuse this higher Being of not being quite clear how the stars move, whereas you yourself are. Is that sensible?  
  **Galileo starts to make a statement:** I am a faithful son of the Church…  
  **Barberini:** He’s a terrible man. He cheerfully sets out to convict God of the most elementary errors in astronomy. I suppose God hadn’t got far enough in his studies before he wrote the bible; is that it? My dear fellow… (Scene 7 page 59.)

• **Barberini taking Galileo’s over arm:** At which he turns himself back into a lamb. You too, my dear fellow, ought really to have come disguised as a good orthodox thinker. It’s my own mask that permits me certain freedoms today. Dressed like this I might be heard to murmur: If God didn’t exist we should have to invent him. Right let’s put on our masks once more. Poor old Galileo hasn’t got one (Scene 7 page 61.)

• **Galileo:** Listen to me: someone who doesn’t know the truth is just thick-headed. But someone who does know it and calls it a lie is a crook (Scene 9 page 70.)

• **Galileo:** I might write in the language of the people, for the many, rather than in Latin for the few. Our new thoughts call for people who work with their hands. Who else cares about knowing the causes of things? People who only see bread on their table don’t want to know how it got baked; that lot would sooner thank God than thank the baker. But people who make the bread will understand that nothing moves unless it has been made to move. Your sister pressing olives, Fulganzio, won’t be astounded but will probably laugh when she hears that the sun isn’t a golden coat of arms but a motor: that the earth moves because the sun sets it moving (Scene 9 pages 79-80.)

• **The Inquisitor:** This evil man knows what he is up to when he writes his astronomical works not in Latin but in the idiom of fishwives and wool merchants (Scene 12 page 92.)

• **The Inquisitor:** Practically speaking one wouldn’t have to push very far with him. He is a man of the flesh. He would give in immediately.  
  **The Pope:** He enjoys himself in more ways than any man I have ever met. His thinking springs from sensuality. Give him an old wine or a new idea, and he cannot say no. But I won’t have any condemnation of the physical facts, no war cries of ‘Up the Church’ ‘Up Reason’. I let him write his book on condition that he finished it by saying that the last word lay with faith, not science. He met that condition.
The Inquisitor: But how? His book shows a stupid man, representing the view of Aristotle of course, arguing with a clever one who of course represents Mr Galilei’s own; and which do you think, your Holiness, delivers the final remark? (Scene 12 page 93.)

- Andrea: Like the man in the street we said ‘He’ll die, but he’ll never recant.’ You came back: I’ve recanted, but I am going to live.’ – ‘Your hands are stained’, we said. You’re saying: ‘better stained than empty’.


Andrea: I of all people should have known. I was eleven when you sold another man’s telescope to the Venetian Senate. And I saw you put that instrument to immortal use. Your friends shook their heads when you bowed to that boy in Florence: science gained an audience. Even then you used to laugh at heroes. ‘People who suffer are boring’ you said. ‘Misfortune comes from miscalculation’. And ‘When there are obstacles the shortest line between two points may be a crooked one.’ (Scene 14 page 106.)

- Galileo: They did win. And there is no scientific work that can only be written by only one particular man.

Andrea: Why did you recant then?

Galileo: I recanted because I was afraid of physical pain.

Andrea: No!

Galileo: They showed me the instruments.

Andrea: So it was not planned?

Galileo: It was not.

Pause

Andrea loudly: Science only makes one demand: contribution to science (Scene 14 page 107.)

- Andrea turning around: No, it was me. You should learn to use your eyes. The milk’s paid for, the jug too. The old woman can keep it. Oh, and I didn’t answer your question, Giuseppe. People can’t fly through the air on a stick. It’d have to have a machine on it, to say the least. But there’s no machine like that so far. Maybe there never will be, as a human being’s too heavy. But of course one never knows. There are a lot of things we don’t know yet, Giuseppe. We’re really just at the beginning (Scene 15 page 113.)
TEXT 4: THE QUIET AMERICAN

The Quiet American is a novel that strikes a chord with Australian readers via its setting in Vietnam, a short time before Australia became involved in yet another of the armed struggles that predominated in South East Asia for much of the twentieth century. Many students may have older relatives who were personally involved in the latter stages of this conflict. The text is also of interest to students of history and politics due to references to the dying stages of French colonialism in the region and the emergence of the United States in a role that has been described by some as being neo-colonialist.

The novel was first published in 1955 and in some ways it can be seen as being prophetic, foretelling the potential dangers for the United States and their allies when getting involved in the Vietnamese conflict, which started as a war of independence and then became a civil war. Despite the early warning signs that this was not a wise move history shows that the Americans went ahead with their plans. It was only after massive loss of life and widespread destruction that would take decades to recover from that the United States was eventually forced to try and withdraw into ‘peace with honour’. Only then were the Vietnamese able to create their own political system in a reunified country. Given the current situation in Iraq, many commentators have likened what happened in Vietnam a few decades earlier to the current situation there. A moot point to consider might be: how many of history’s lessons have been learned?

Themes

Conflict caused by War

In the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, the map of the world showed that most of Africa, Asia and South America were colonies of the major European powers of the time. These included Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, France, Spain, Holland, Portugal and Germany. Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos were part of the French empire. France ruled this area, known as Indochina, for many years, and Vietnam itself was considered to have three major regions: Cochin in the south, Annam in the central and Tonkin in the north. European countries colonised these parts of the world so that they could exploit the natural resources of the colonies and find a source of cheap raw materials for their own industries. French control of the colonies was maintained through military might, and the local people had little say in the way that the country was ruled or how its resources were put to use.

Throughout its history there have been numerous wars and shifts in political power and dominance in what is now known as Vietnam. As neighbours with other countries that are now known as China, Cambodia and Laos, there have been many conflicts between the varying ethnic groups and the empires that existed in this region have waxed and waned. At different stages in its history the northern part of Vietnam was under Chinese rule while at other times parts of the south were under the control of the Khmer empire and the boundaries that exist between the modern day countries are only recent developments, reflecting current international frontiers. For many of the ethnic groups that exist in the remote regions of Vietnam, the current borders mean little, as the people are influenced more by tribal rather than political borderlines. When the modern day Vietnamese speak of the armed conflicts in the twentieth century, they talk of the ‘war of independence’ against the French, while what people in the
west call ‘the Vietnam War’ is known as ‘the American War’. At the time that the text is set the ‘war of independence’ is reaching its final stages, but the country is about to be embroiled in a new conflict that would last until 1975.

The Vietnamese struggle for independence from the French forms the backdrop for the text and there are constant reminders of the death, destruction and dislocation that are so much a part of warfare throughout the story. There are set battlegrounds in the north where the opposing armies are quite regular and traditional in nature, with groups standing toe to toe and fighting, whereas in the south and other parts of the country, there are more a series of skirmishes and guerilla actions. In this war, the French rule the day. They are armed with artillery, planes and helicopters that give them a military supremacy that the Viet Minh cannot match. At night it is a different story. The military hardware that is so effective by day cannot be utilised and this makes it possible for guerilla groups to come out of the darkness, attack targets, and then melt back into the night. They have the added advantage of knowing the landscape intimately and they are not encumbered by heavy equipment and can therefore move swiftly and silently, making detection and pursuit very difficult.

The Vietnamese people have to try to live their lives as best they can while the struggle goes on around them. If they live in the countryside, they may have some safety away from the areas where the armies are fighting. However, they are not totally immune, as the destruction of the sampan shows: “Down we went again, away from the gnarled and fissured forest towards the river, flattening out over the neglected rice fields, aimed like a bullet at one small sampan on the yellow steam. The cannon gave a single burst of tracer and the sampan blew apart in a shower of sparks.” In the major cities such as Saigon where there is a greater concentration of French people, the war is brought closer to them with incidents such as the bicycle bombs. Frequent mention is also made of the mesh placed on buildings to protect the citizens from grenade attacks.

People like Pyle have a privileged position because they can sit back and look at the situation from a detached political and philosophical point of view, having no connections to the people whose lives are being affected by the war. They have the luxury of thinking of the civilians as pawns or objects that can be used at will to further political agendas. It’s all very well to talk about domino effects and third forces in the abstract, but when it comes to the harsher realities it’s not so easy. Witness Pyle’s response after the bombing: “Pyle said, ‘It’s awful.’ He looked at the wet on his shoes and said in a sick voice, ‘What’s that?’ ‘Blood,’ I said. ‘Haven’t you seen it before?’ … He was seeing a real war for the first time: he had punted down into Phat Diem in a kind of schoolboy dream, and anyway in his eyes soldiers didn’t count.” However, he’s back to his old form again at the later meeting with Fowler when he dismisses the deaths of the civilians by saying “They were only war casualties … It was a pity, but you can’t always hit your target. Anyway they died in the right cause.”

*The Quiet American* also shows the arbitrary nature of war, where random deaths are a fact of life, and people’s lives can be ended or changed forever if they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, like the unfortunate people in the sampan and those in the square. As Fowler accurately comments “A two hundred pound bomb does not discriminate”.

Conflict caused by Politics

In the melting pot of post World War Two Indochina, political ideologies compete. The French colonial influence is on the wane. France has ruled the region for a considerable period of time driven by its own political and economic interests, which have dictated strategy and policy, but their days of power are numbered. The key question is: which ideology will take over after the French leave?

The Viet Minh see themselves as the natural choice. Led by the very popular Ho Chi Minh, they have the support of many of the peasant population, whose lives have been dominated by the wealthy bourgeoisie for centuries, condemning them to meagre, subsistence existences. With the French gone, there is a chance to restructure society so that the wealth of the country is more evenly distributed. They are not the only Vietnamese contender for power, as there are many other splinter groups, each with their own political agendas, and some have private armies to back them up.

The American presence is another complicating factor. They, like most others, can see that France is on the way out. The U.S. wants to exert its influence so that whichever group gains power will be sympathetic to them. At this stage the United States is not prepared to become directly involved, so it resorts to covert means to achieve its political ends through agents of the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA. In this way it can try to shape what is happening in the country without dirtying its hands, and America can also deny any involvement or interference with the government. The bottom line is to ensure that communism does not take over the country, as this form of government is anathema to them, and it is not considered to be suitable for Vietnam or indeed the world. The development of the idea of a ‘third force’ is a fallback position for the U.S. and the way that the bombing took place shows that this idea is fraught with risk, not only for Americans, but for the Vietnamese people as well. By supplying the third force with arms and military assistance it would make Vietnam feel obligated to the Americans, and dependent on them for future aid, until they had established and entrenched themselves in power. This would have put the United States in a very strong position to build and maintain their influence.

In the tumultuous state that exists in Vietnam, several very different groups have their own ideas about what direction Vietnam’s social and political future should take and they will go to whatever lengths are necessary to impose these views. The peace settlement after the French withdrew was supposed to lead to elections that would decide a new government for the country. However, this did not happen and the country was divided into two separate countries near the seventeenth parallel of latitude, with North Vietnam being led by a communist government and South Vietnam led by a democratic government. As it became more obvious that the French would be defeated, the United States entered the conflict, as it wanted to stop the spread of world communism. The Americans had a belief in the ‘Domino Theory’ which held that if one country ‘fell’ to communism that this would then lead the neighbouring country to ‘fall’, and so on, until communism had spread throughout the world. Vietnam was where the Americans decided that they would take a stand, and they poured in billions of dollars of ‘military assistance’. This transformed into direct military involvement in the form of combat troops and aircraft to bomb enemy targets.

Hence, Vietnam became a battleground for competing ideologies. At the time of the novel, China had been a communist country for five years and was very happy to assist its southern neighbours in ridding themselves of their ‘colonial oppressors’. Later, the Chinese went on to fight against the Americans, whom they accused of being ‘imperialists’, trying to build a new empire and to spread their influence into
the region. China saw little difference between the French and the Americans whom they regarded as serving their own interests at the expense of the Vietnamese people: the citizens of Vietnam were not allowed to be independent and to decide their own destiny.

**Conflict caused by Love**

The love triangle between Fowler, Phoung and Pyle adds spice to the novel and it can be read on a simple, interpersonal relationship level as well as on a more symbolic level as the characters strongly represent their respective countries.

On the one hand Fowler’s feelings for Phuong can be seen as a mixture of simple lust and the desire to possess an object of considerable beauty, and there is a considerable measure of selfishness in the way that he treats her. At other times, there are signs that his feelings are deeper and nobler and that he does have her interests at heart. As she dances with Pyle he has a vivid flash of what had attracted him to her in the first place: “Suddenly watching her feet, so light and precise and mistress of his shuffle, I was in love again. I could hardly believe that in an hour, two hours, she would be coming back to me in that dingy room with the communal closet and the old women squatting on the landing.”

Fowler recognised that he did not have a lot to offer to Phuong in terms of a long term relationship and that it would only be a matter of time before she left him. Again at the restaurant, he has a chance to step outside himself and to see how others view him: “Suddenly I saw myself as he saw me, a man of middle age, with eyes a little bloodshot, beginning to put on weight, ungraceful in love, less noisy than Granger perhaps but more cynical, less innocent …” It is clear that Miss Hei holds him in little regard and Phuong’s relationship with him is an impediment to a more suitable partnership with someone who can offer her a higher degree of material comfort and provide her with children.

Because of the rivalry between them, it is not possible to rule out jealousy as being a contributing factor in the way that Fowler set Pyle up to die. Fowler resents Pyle, taking Phuong from him, and here was a chance not only to avenge this, but also perhaps to get Phuong back for himself. He sees that he is approaching his final years and if he loses Phuong he will be condemned to live out his last years as an old and lonely man: “Always I was afraid of losing happiness.”

Pyle on the other hand has a very different view of Phuong whom he places on a higher level, exalting her beauty. He has middle class American aspirations of being her protector and benefactor. Pyle is capable of giving her a wealthier and more secure life away from the war and the poverty of Vietnam. He judges that “She can’t be [happy] – not in her situation. She needs children” and he sees himself as being the one who can give her what she needs. His unconsciously arrogant assumption that he can take Phuong away from his rival, if he is given the opportunity, grates on Fowler and adds to the idea that revenge played a part in Pyle’s death.

Pyle does not try to know her in the same way that Fowler had done at first. Fowler has had the opportunity to develop a better understanding of Phuong through a long period of observation, but still asks himself “and did you understand her either?” Pyle consciously tries to mould her into a person who will be suitable in his world, and it is clear that it is she who will have to change.
Fowler summarises the differences between the loves that he and Pyle have for Phuong: “A dollar love, of course, would include marriage and Junior, even though later it might include Reno or the Virgin Islands or wherever they go nowadays for their divorces. A dollar love had good intentions, a clear conscience, and to hell with everybody. But my love had no intentions: it knew the future. All one could do was try to make the future less hard, to break the future gently when it came …”

Phuong is adaptable and compliant in the relationships that she has with the two men. Fowler relates how “She told me that she missed me, which of course was what I wanted to hear: she always told me what I wanted to hear.” With Fowler, she is able to take delight in simple things such as her pretty scarves, her magazines and her films; he is amused and diverted when she enthuses about these in such an innocent and child-like way. By contrast, when she is with Pyle, things are more serious and she even changes her appearance to please him: “I saw that she was doing her hair differently, allowing it to fall black and straight over her shoulders. I remembered that Pyle had criticised the elaborate hairdressing which she thought became the daughter of a mandarin.” Readers are never quite sure about the extent to which Phuong can be said to have love for either man. Her feelings have to be inferred from her actions, and these are filtered through the eyes of Fowler, who, when it comes to Phuong, has admitted that he is not the most reliable and accurate of judges.

The marriage of Thomas and Helen Fowler shows a different view of love. This is love that has gone bad and has done considerable damage to those involved. In her letter, Helen alludes to the hurt that she has suffered, and also the harm that Thomas did to Anne, whom he had left her for. It is difficult to tell whether Helen still sincerely harbours the affection for Fowler that she mentions, or whether she intends to be ironic and to pay back some of the hurt she has endured. The transitory nature of Fowler’s love is the target of another of her barbs in the letter: “You say that it will be the end of life to lose this girl. Once you used exactly that phrase to me – I could show you the letter, I have it still – and I suppose you wrote in the same way to Anne.”

_The Quiet American_ raises the question as to what extent there is, or can be, love in marriage. While there was love at the start of the marriage of Thomas and Helen, readers wonder what might have taken place had Pyle taken Phuong back to America, juxtaposed with what might have happened had Fowler married Phuong.

**Conflict caused by Breach of Trust and Betrayal**

When trust is given between people there is an expectation that it will be returned. In the text, both trust and betrayal feature heavily, and sometimes trust is repaid with betrayal. In the relationship between Fowler and Pyle, Pyle tried to act honourably in his quest to win Phuong from Fowler, and he trusts that this will be reciprocated. Hence, when he sees evidence of Fowler’s “European duplicity” about the phoney assurance that his wife “has more or less agreed to divorce me”, he is incensed, hurt and betrayed: “Couldn’t you have won without lying?”

On a broader level, Fowler was sceptical about what Pyle was really up to in Vietnam, but he trusted Pyle to be working for the welfare of the Vietnamese people. When it became clear that Pyle had played a very large part in the bombing in the crowded square, which was little more than state-sponsored terrorism, Fowler felt betrayed and he repaid this by committing the ultimate betrayal, setting Pyle up for death at the hands of the Viet Minh. Still, on the subject of the bombing, Pyle had placed trust in General The and
he tries to find excuses so that he doesn’t have to believe that he has been betrayed: “The wouldn’t have
done this.  I’m sure he wouldn’t.  Somebody deceived him.  The Communists …” Fowler also places
some trust in the information provided by Mister Heng but he doesn’t act solely on this and waits for Pyle
to implicate himself even deeper in the culpability for the bombing.

The text shows how self interest rather than altruism is more often the potent motivating force in human
relationships.  Linked to the theme of trust is the nature of truth.  It is clear how frequently appearances
can be highly deceptive as, on the surface, Pyle seems to be a sincere, innocent, honourable and amiable
person, yet he is one of the key engineers of the horrendous bombing, and his actions are made even more
shocking when he does not show the slightest remorse for the deaths of the innocent victims.  The text
also shows that decisions taken on the basis of limited information or understanding often end up in
disaster.

When it comes to matters of trust between people, Fowler says it all when he observes, “Oh yes, people
always, everywhere, loved their enemies.  It was their friends they preserved for pain and vacuity.”


**Structure**

While this text can be broadly classified as a novel, it has a number of other generic threads running through it. It has elements of a moral and philosophical debate about the nature of war and truth. It can also be seen to have romantic and historical threads intertwined.

This novel is worthy of study in its exploration of the complex clash between cultures and political ideologies, interspersed with fraught and labyrinthine interpersonal relationships. The murder investigation adds to the potent mixture. The setting of the novel in an exotic, tropical hothouse widens students’ geographical, historical and cultural knowledge, providing an appropriate background for the steamy and powerful forces that are at work in the lives of the Vietnamese people and the foreign interlopers, as well as in the global politics of the era.

The flow of the novel is, to some extent, bound to a ‘whodunit’ structure. It is a post-modern novel. Readers know from the outset that Pyle is dead, and the focus is on the successive filling in of the background information to his death and to identify who was responsible. The linking of the three central characters – Fowler, Pyle and Phuong, forms a rich tapestry of interwoven storylines that answer the questions about the murder. Along the way we are shown a range of possible motives and also how Pyle almost invites his own death for the clumsy way in which he mismanaged his role in Vietnam.

The text does not flow as a conventional linear narrative, but rather jumps forwards and backwards in time, tantalising the reader with tidbits from the present and the past. By the end, the more important plot lines reach varying degrees of resolution and the people involved in the murder have been identified. While it seems that Fowler and Phuong have a future together, readers must wonder if the relationship can survive, given the damage that his dishonesty caused, combined with the hostility of her sister and Fowler’s own poor track record at being able to sustain relationships with women.

**Style**

The novel is a first person narrative seen through the eyes of Thomas Fowler and he provides readers with his own perspective on the events and people. It is important to look at the values that are explored in his descriptions. His extensive experience in troubled situations both as a reporter and in his troubled personal life, colour the way that he recounts what he sees – he has been rejected before and one of his ‘defence strategies’ is to try to remain detached and uninvolved. He is also given to searching within himself to provide meaning and context for what is happening around him.

It is also worth noting that the relationships between the three main characters also operate on a symbolic level. Fowler can be seen to symbolise the ‘old world’, a colonial remnant. He and his kind have been in similar situations in the past and to some degree they have learned from the mistakes made. Pyle represents the role of the United States in exporting a ‘new world order’ and trying to spread his country’s political ideology and influence to prevent the spread of world communism. Phuong symbolises Asia generally, and Indochina in particular and, like her country, is open to offers from others, playing one off against the other to seek the best advantage. It is no accident that her name can be translated as ‘Phoenix’, the legendary creature from mythology that rises from the ashes.
Major Characters

Thomas Fowler

Thomas Fowler is a world-weary journalist who has seen it all. He is depicted as being a cynical journeyman who takes pains to be a “reporter” rather than a “correspondent” and makes much of his detachment from what is happening around him. Having had wide experience of others in times of war and peace, women he’s dallied with, and people in general, he approaches his relationships in a fairly self-centred way. Fowler frequently doesn’t fully think through the consequences of his actions or how they may affect others, as seen in the indecorous scene at Pyle’s office at the American Legation. His experiences in both his personal and professional life have led him to develop a world view that sees his fellow men as untrustworthy and capable of very foolish acts. Fowler’s comfortable sinecure is threatened when his office wants to recall him, and a situation develops in which he might lose Phoung to Pyle. When he first met Phoung, Fowler recalls “that first tormenting year when I had tried so passionately to understand her, when I had begged her to tell me what she thought”, but he then starts to take her for granted and concludes: “One never knows another human being.” Through the series of crises that happen to him, Fowler starts to recognise the depth of his feelings for Phoung and what it would mean not to have a future that included her. His outrage at what Pyle did with the explosives shakes him from his detachment and he is persuaded by Mister Heng that: “Sooner or later … one has to take sides. If one is to remain human.” Fowler is self-deprecating and lacks self-esteem, and in some ways is quite reckless in the way that he tackles his job, deliberately placing himself in dangerous situations.

Alden Pyle

Alden Pyle is in many ways the opposite of Fowler. He is young, compared to Fowler’s rapidly approaching middle age. He is enthusiastic about his work, whereas Fowler sees his work as a convenience that allows him a lifestyle that he has come to enjoy. Pyle is passionate about what he believes to be just causes and is keen to get involved, while Fowler is happy to sit back and to watch. Where Fowler, with his broad experience, sees the subtleties and complexities of politics and human relationships, Pyle sees the world in very black and white terms and seems incapable of dealing with the intricacies of political life in an alien land. He seems to be naïve and transparent, and yet he has the ‘trade craft’ to keep his ‘cover’ intact until quite late in the chain of events. Pyle is doomed to failure in trying to apply a simplistic solution to a very complex problem in Vietnam. His blundering approach to his work sees him involved in matters that he is ill equipped to deal with and, as a result, many people’s lives are destroyed while he adds to the problems rather than raising possible solutions.

Pyle develops a love for Phoung, but never really understands her in the same way that Fowler does, which leads readers to question whether he loves Phoung as a person or as the ideal she represents. He wants to change her so that she will be acceptable in his world, and Phoung is a willing participant in this process. There can be little doubt of Pyle’s sincerity, even though his ideas and actions are misguided. He is honourable to a fault in his personal relationships, as can be seen in his discussions with Fowler about his love for Phoung. The old saying ‘all’s fair in love and war’ is only partly true of Pyle. His role in the war is ruthless and unscrupulous, but in matters of the heart he is very ‘gentlemanly’ and chivalrous. He represents the role of the United States in exporting a ‘new world order’ and trying to spread his country’s political ideology and influence to prevent the spread of world communism.
Phuong

Phuong is the object of both Fowler and Pyle’s affections, and both find her highly desirable. She exudes an aura of mystery that Fowler in particular wants to lose himself in, while Pyle sees her almost like an ‘exotic flower’ that he wants to take home and show off to his friends and family. The ways in which she is unfathomable to both men adds to her allure and they are equally ardent in their quest to have a permanent relationship with her. Abetted by her sister, she tries to turn the attraction both men have towards her to her advantage, which places her in a position of power, as she can pick or choose between them. When Fowler’s wife refuses to give him a divorce Phuong switches her affections to Pyle and, when he dies, she returns to Fowler. Readers never know with certainty how she feels about the men as she is not likely to come out into the open about it, given her cultural background. Readers have to infer Phuong’s feelings from her actions and words.

Minor Characters

Vigot

Vigot is an old style policeman who has reasonable grounds to suspect that Fowler knows more than he is revealing about the circumstances of Pyle’s death. He painstakingly tracks down clues and any leads that he can obtain about the murder, such as the presence of cement between the dog’s toes. There is a strong sense that Vigot is merely ‘going through the motions’ and he states the reason that he is still pursuing the investigation is because “The American Minister keeps bothering us.” Vigot realises that his own country’s involvement in Vietnam is coming to a close and he has become tired of the subterfuge and ever-shifting alliances that stymie his investigations, leading him to observe, “We don’t have the same trouble, thank God, when a Frenchman is killed.” Unfortunately for him, Vigot feels that Fowler is complicit in Pyle’s death, but without proof he has to let matters lie, and he tells him “I don’t suppose I’ll trouble you again.” He does exercise good judgement in knowing when to give up on a hopeless case.

There is another side to Vigot too. Fowler recalls meeting him at some parties and he “had noticed him because he appeared incongruously in love with his wife, who ignored him, a flashy and false blonde.” Readers having this insight might see him as a somewhat pathetic figure, as his personal life seems to be in tune with his professional life – in neither sphere is he particularly effectual.

Granger

Bill Granger’s infrequent appearances are brief but full of paradoxes. At times he has a slapdash approach to his work, relying on information fed by the military authorities for his stories, while at other times he can be forceful and even aggressive in pursuit of a story. We see evidence of this in his interrogation of the French officers at the press conference. He is, however, a ‘soft target’, and there is a contrast between his technique, and Fowler’s more thorough investigative methods, that put him where the action is.

Granger manages to elicit some sympathy from readers when he bares his soul to Fowler about how the bad news concerning his son’s illness is having a negative effect on him. He also shows that he is aware of how others see and feel about him, revealing a sensitivity and capacity for introspection. On the other hand, Granger’s hedonistic lifestyle and the way that he deals with the local people make him a very
unsympathetic character. For many readers he represents all the brashness and naked self-interest that is unappealing about Americans abroad. He becomes the quintessential ‘Ugly American’.

**Mister Heng**

Mister Heng makes a number of important appearances in the text. At the Quai Mytho, it is he who makes Fowler realise that there are different layers to the conflicts. Heng indicates that Fowler needs to be aware of, and educated about, the issues. Heng is an astute judge of character and in Fowler he sees a person who may be useful in furthering his cause. He does not go overboard in providing detailed information about the OSS bicycle bomb conspiracy, but drops enough clues to whet Fowler’s appetite, allowing him to fill in the missing pieces for himself. After the bombs have gone off, Heng reappears to make sure that Fowler has reached the right conclusions about who is behind it all. Their final meeting is after the major bomb blast, and Heng makes sure that he builds on the outrage that Fowler feels about the way that innocent people have been killed to make a political point. He is intent on getting Fowler to jump down from the safety of sitting on the fence and take a stand for what is right.

Heng tries to make Fowler understand what is being done to his country and his people through the interfering actions of foreign powers. While this might be well intentioned from the point of view of the foreigners, from a Vietnamese point of view the actions being taken are unforgivable. Readers are left with a number of questions about Heng. He seems to have a very good information base and knows a great deal about the machinations of the various groups involved in the conflict, but if he knew what was going to happen with the diolacton, why did he do nothing to prevent it? Was it because there were aspects to the bombing that suited his political ends? Or was it because having knowledge was one thing, but having the power to act on the knowledge was beyond the capabilities of his group?

**Helen Fowler**

While she is not directly seen in the text, Helen Fowler has an important presence, as she is controlling Thomas’s life from their home in England. The high handed manner of her initial refusal of a divorce shows her to be a wounded person, who is enjoying a rare moment of power over her husband, who in the past had caused her much grief. She ‘takes the moral high ground’ by her refusal, pointing to many valid reasons why she should not acquiesce, but the underlying subtext shows the hurt that she tries to camouflage with reason and morality. The later agreement is expressed much more simply and directly by her, as would be expected in a telegram, but it leaves readers to ponder her motives.

**Dominguez**

Fowler’s assistant is portrayed as a competent and efficient person who manages to be effective even when suffering from illness. When he is introduced, it is in glowing and affectionate terms: “… his pride was deeply hidden, and reduced to the smallest proportion possible … for any human being … All that you encountered in daily contact with him was gentleness, humility and an absolute love of truth.” His contribution to Fowler’s success in putting together important stories should not be underestimated. Dominguez has quite a servile approach to his relationship with Fowler and even though Fowler admitted, “Now that he was ill I realised how much I owed him” he still can be quite brusque with his employee, as when Dominguez turns up after the fateful meeting with Pyle.
**Captain Trouin**

The pilot takes Fowler on a dive-bombing raid in contravention of the regulations and shows Fowler a side to the war that he had not observed before. Trouin is a capable pilot who is full of contradictions: within a short space of time he has strafed a sampan and “didn’t even wait to see our victims struggling to survive” and then he tells Fowler “‘We will make a little detour. The sunset is wonderful on the calcaire. You must not miss it,’ he added kindly, like a host who is showing the beauty of his estate.”

Trouin continues to play the host, with a visit to the opium den, and when Fowler questions him about the necessity of shooting up the sampan he replies that “we have orders to shoot up anything in sight” and then tries to minimise the impact of these words by emphasising the risks that they faced from ground fire. He states how much he hates napalm bombing and how he would risk court martial by refusing to do this. Trouin is generally cynical about war, those who send people to war and those who profit by it. He justifies his actions in the country by concluding that “… we are professionals: we have to go on fighting till the politicians tell us to stop.”
Important Quotations and Passages


- Vigot interviewing Fowler after Pyle’s death.

“You sound like a friend of his,” Vigot said, looking past me at Phuong...
“I am a friend,” I said. (Page 17)

“The trouble was,” I said, “he got mixed up.”
“To speak plainly,” Vigot said, “I am not altogether sorry. He was doing a lot of harm.”
“God save us always,” I said, “from the innocent and the good.” (Page 20)

- Pyle cabling his London office with the news story of Pyle’s death.

“It wouldn’t have done to cable the details of his true career, that before he died he had been responsible for at least fifty deaths, for it would have damaged Anglo-American relations, the Minister would have been upset.” (Page 21)

- Puong’s reaction to the news of Pyle’s death.

She put the needle down and sat back on her heels, looking at me. There was no scene, no tears, just thought – the long private thought of somebody who has to alter a whole course of life.
...“Am I the only one who really cared for Pyle?” (Page 22)

- When Fowler first meets Pyle and tries to explain the situation in Vietnam.

“York,” Pyle said, “wrote that what the East needed was a Third Force.” Perhaps I should have seen that fanatic gleam, the quick response to a phrase, the magic sound of figures: Fifth Column, Third Force, Seventh Day. I might have saved all of us a lot of trouble, even Pyle, if I had realised the direction of that indefatigable young brain. (Page 25)

- Fowler defending his actions to himself and to Vigot.

“You can rule me out,” I said. “I’m not involved. Not involved,” I repeated. It had been an article of my creed. The human condition being what it was, let them fight, let them love, let them murder, I would not be involved. My fellow journalists called themselves correspondents; I preferred the title of reporter. I wrote what I saw. I took no action. Even an opinion is a kind of action. (Page 28)

- Fowler’s philosophising regarding religion and death.

Death was the only absolute value in my life. Lose life and one would lose nothing again forever. I envied those who could believe in a God and I distrusted them. I felt they were keeping their courage up with a fable of the changeless and the permanent. Death was far more certain than God, and with death there would be no longer the daily possibility of love dying. (Page 44)
Encountering conflict

- Pyle discusses his feelings and intentions for marrying Phuong with her boyfriend, Fowler.

“She’ll just have to choose between us, Thomas. That’s fair enough.” But was it fair? I felt for the first time the premonitory chill of loneliness. It was all fantastic, and yet... He might be a poor lover, but I was the poor man. He had in his hand the infinite riches of respectability. (Page 58)

- Fowler reflecting on Pyle stealing Phuong’s love from him, as well as other things.

I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused. (Page 60)

- Dominguez reporting on Pyle’s stated political/military solution for Vietnam.

“Then someone asked him some stock question about the chances of the Government here ever beating the Vietminh and he said a Third Force could do it. There was always a Third Force to be found free from Communism and the taint of colonialism – national democracy he called it; you only had to find a leader and keep him safe from the old colonial powers.” (Page 124)

- Fowler’s flippancy sarcasm taken literally by Pyle.

“Oh, go away.” I said. “Go to your Third Force and York Harding and the Role of Democracy. Go away and play with plastics.”

Later I had to admit that he had carried out my instructions to the letter. (Page 134)

- Captain Trouin speaking about shooting up anything in sight.

“I’m not fighting a colonial war. Do you think I’d do these things for the planters of Terre Rouge? I’d rather be court-martialled. We are fighting all of your wars, but you leave us the guilt.” (Page 151)

“It’s not a matter of reason or justice. We all get involved in a moment of emotion and then we cannot get out. War and Love – they have always been compared.” (Page 152)

- Pyle’s reaction to the reality of war.

Pyle said, “It’s awful.” He looked at the wet on his shoes and said in a sick voice, “What’s that?”

“Blood,” I said. “Haven’t you ever seen it before?”

He said, “I must get them cleaned before I meet the Minister.”

I don’t think he knew what he was saying. He was seeing a real war for the first time: he had punted down into Phat Diem in a kind of schoolboy dream, and anyway in his eyes soldiers didn’t count.

I forced him, with my hand on his shoulder, to look around. I said, “This is the hour when the place is always full of women and children – it’s the shopping hour. Why choose that of all hours?”

He said weakly, “There was to have been a parade.”

... He was impregnably armoured by his good intentions and his ignorance. (Page 162-163)

- Mr Heng thanking Fowler for arranging an opportunity to kill Pyle.

“Sooner or later,” Heng said., “one has to take sides. If one is to remain human.” (Page 174)
Sample essay prompts/stimulus material

Write an extended piece for a specified purpose and audience, exploring ideas and using detail from at least one set text. Your response may be an expository, persuasive or imaginative piece of writing. Your response must be based on the ideas in the prompt.

- “In suffering we are all equal.” – Sir Edward ‘Weary’ Dunlop

- “The ways in which individuals respond to conflict are determined by their personal experiences and expectations.”

- “The consequences of conflict are as significant as its causes.”

- “Conflict triggers social progress.”

- “The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.” – Albert Einstein

- “Violence does not resolve conflict; it only creates more conflict.”

- “Fear is a strong catalyst for conflict.”

- “Conflicts challenge individuals to discover their strengths and personal flaws.”

- “Compromise is often needed to resolve conflict.”

- “The effects of conflict on individuals and their relationships are not always destructive.”
Supplementary texts and References

Print texts

Animal Farm – George Orwell
Border Crossing – Pat Barker
I’m Not Scared – Niccolo Ammaniti
Omagh Voices of Loss - Graham Spencer
The Crucible – Arthur Miller
The Fight - Martin Flanagan and Tom Uren
The Kite Runner – Khaled Housseini
The Secret River – Kate Grenville
The War Diaries of Weary Dunlop – E.E.Dunlop
The Rugmaker of Mazar-e-Sharif – Hillman R & Mazari, N

Websites

Amnesty International - http://www.amnesty.org
Astronomy http://www.physicsoftheuniverse.com/cosmological.html
Conflict Archive on the Internet (CAIN) – http://www.cain.ulst.ac.uk

Films

The Crucible (1996) – Nicholas Hytner (director)
The Beach (2000) – Danny Boyle (director)
Lord of the Flies (1990) – Harry Hook (director)
Bloody Sunday (2002) – Paul Greengrass (director)
In the Name of the Father (1993) – Jim Sheridan (director)

Songs/Lyrics

Bicentennial Man – Paul Kelly
Sunday Bloody Sunday, Peace on Earth – U2
Paper Sun – Def Leppard
Broken Things – Julie Miller

Poetry

An Omagh Remembrance – John Friel
Homecoming – Bruce Dawe
Encountering conflict

**Print Media Texts (daily tabloids and broadsheets)**

*The Age, The Australian, Herald-Sun*
- reports, editorials, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, photographs, political cartoons

**Television programs (news and current affairs programs)**

ABC, SBS, Channel 7, 9, 10 News Broadcasts
*Four Corners, A Current Affair, Today Tonight*

*Who Bombed Omagh? Four Corners, March 26, 2001*

**Situation Comedies**

*Seinfeld*
*Neighbours*
*The Simpsons*

**Picture Books**

*Rose Blanche* – Roberto Innocenti
*War Game* - Michael Forman
*Anne Frank* - Josephine Pool and Angela Barrett
*The House of Narcissus* - Margaret Wild and Wayne Harris
*The Arrival* – Shaun Tan

**Reviews**

*Day of Death, The Observer, Sunday May 9, 2004* - Peter Stanford
*Bush Ballad, The Observer, Sunday January 22, 2006* – Geraldine Bedell
*The Line: A Man’s Experience of the Burma Railway; A Son’s Quest to Understand, The Age, December 17, 2005* – Tony Thompson
Final examination advice

- Use the understanding of the Context that you have developed throughout the year through your study of set texts and supplementary texts.

- Develop your own collection of materials relevant to the Context.

- Gather a range of perspectives on the Context.

- Ensure that all your textual considerations are within the framework of the Context.

- Find potential elements of the set texts that may be used in your writing.

- Always consider the three most important aspects of writing: audience, purpose and form.

- Even though a Statement of Intention is not required or assessed in the final examination, consider framing the assessor’s thoughts with brief notes on your intended audience, purpose and form.

- The three essential writing questions must predominate your thinking:
  - Purpose: What do I want to communicate and why?
  - Audience: For whom is this to be written?
  - Form: In what style/form/genre would it be best to approach this?

- Recognise your personal strengths in writing. Consider the mode of writing that suits you best.

- Ensure you use language appropriate to the purpose and audience.

- It is not advisable to write in poetic form in response to the prompt in the final examination.

- Respond thoughtfully and relevantly to the specific prompt provided for the Context. It is impossible to pre-plan a response to an unseen question.

- Crossing out in the examination is not interpreted as a weakness. In fact, it shows your thinking processes and is seen as a strength. Not even the best writers get it right the first time.

- Good writing demonstrates the capacity to generate your own ideas.
**Glossary (Metalanguage)**

characterisation  
protagonist  
antagonist  
narration  
omniscient narrator  
third person narration  
first person narration  
genre  
style  
form  
narrative structure  
plot pattern  
exposition  
complication  
climax  
crisis point  
turning point  
resolution  
catalyst  
prologue  
epilogue  
flashback  
chronological  
director  
dialogue  
monologue  
soliloquy  
transcript  
camera shots  
close-up  
framing  
costume  
soundtrack  
lighting  
set  
setting  
juxtaposition  
imagery  
paradox  
irony  
sarcasm  
tone  
register  
allegory  
fable
symbol
motif
theme

figurative language
simile
metaphor
personification
onomataepia
emotive language
inclusive language

reflection
recount
narrative
prose
speech
essay
documentary

poetic quality

editorial
letter to the editor
opinion piece
feature article
report
political cartoon
eulogy
obituary

editing
dramatic tension

novel
short story
non-fiction
biography
autobiography
expository
persuasive
imaginative